

NOSTALGIA

and

GLEE

by

C. R. "Luke" McLagan

UNIVERSITY OF
ILLINOIS LIBRARY
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

10 November 1962

With best wishes to you and yours.

C. R. "Larks" McFagan



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

NOSTALGIA AND GLEE

In Sycamore, Illinois

NOSTALGIA AND GLEE

In Sycamore, Illinois

By

C. R. McLagan
(alias "Luke")

First Edition
November, 1960

Copyright© 1960 by C. R. McLagan
Printed in the U.S.A. All rights reserved

Published by
D. C. Lithographers, Inc.
Sycamore, Illinois



Dedicated to our Mothers,

Clara McLagan

and

Gertrude Boies



whose love, encouragement and sacrifice gave us life, hope and charity; whose faith in God and nation set examples for us to follow as citizens of this grand little town of Sycamore. May their devout strength on earth continue to be with us to the end - even though it can now be only in spirit and in sweet memory.

* * * * *

977.325
M 221n

Ill. Hist. Soc.

IF IT COULD ONLY BE SO

Gertrude Boies and Clara McLagan were here in spirit for a short time the other day. No one saw them but they were here we know. They returned for the joy of viewing the display of news stories hung along the walls of that long, long corridor known as Memory Lane.

Many of the stories were written by their sons, Bill and Luke, in the days when both were journalists in the DeKalb-Sycamore area. They recalled the exciting, busy, and often hilarious days when their sons were young, happy and looking hopefully into the future that then seemed so far away.

Once again, as they read the stories, they seemed to live through such interesting events as the old Sycamore chatauquas, mid-winter fairs, disastrous fires, games and the unavoidable stories of sadness, injury, illness and death. Rapidly their now spiritualized memories swept them from their childhood days of the horse and buggy era through a swift, and almost astonishing growth of Sycamore, to this day of planes, parking meters and NO MORE RAILWAY PASSENGER TRAINS.

So, now, you too can see and read what they saw on display along Memory Lane. You can read it in the pages of this book. These bookbound tales are not framed with bark and leaves from Sycamore trees as they were along the Lane, but they tell the same story of Sycamore, perhaps too briefly, but even so, with nostalgia and glee.

We hope you like it all as well as Gertrude and Clara did.

PREFACE

This is a book built on a foundation of memories. We have drawn on our own memory a great deal, but also on the memories of many others, plus the records in official places and from the Sycamore True Republican and Sycamore Tribune news files, and from county histories.

Memories are such a sweet sadness. They bring laughter through tears. We live again our childhood and youth as we dwell with memory. As we all don our crowns of gray and move toward the inevitable eternity, it is an almost universal wish that we could be suddenly transported by a miracle of science, back to the days of sandlot baseball and the ol' swimmin' hole. Most everyone wishes, too, that he or she could live life over - only better - and no one would want to miss the fun we had in our younger days.

Please pardon us for entering so much of our own personal "memoirs". We took the liberty of doing so because, to our great surprise and greater disappointment, we found the humor of history the most difficult of all to find - and, making the disappointment much worse was the fact that we had very foolishly thought it would be the easiest.

We have made no attempt to give you ALL of Sycamore's history and humor, nor all of its available human interest stories. To have done so would have demanded a volume of huge proportions. It would have been so costly that you would not have accepted it.

One word or two of warning. The first section dealing briefly with a chronological history of the Sycamore area has some fascinating information now and then, but practically no humor. The next section, dealing with our churches, is treated with devout respect, but you will find some quiet humor in it, too. There are bits of humor to be found scattered all through the book after you pass the chronology.

We have tried very hard to give you an interesting book, but because this was our first attempt at a project of this kind, we have fears. As we write this preface, near the end of the job, we are not at all satisfied with our book. We hope and pray you will not be disappointed, but we offer our apologies and say we are sorry - - just in case.

It has been a lot of work. We walked many miles. We worked at our desk every day that our health would permit, also

many nights, holidays and Sundays.

Our supreme thanks to Bill Boies, as it was he who sparked the idea to us. We were in a low point of health when we began it. The job got us out of doors, in the sun, for many long walks, that did a great deal toward rebuilding our health. Had it not been for our loneliness we could have described this summer of 1959 as wonderful.

And now we must thank those who did so much to help us in one way or another. Morris Warner not only gave us pencil notes on several stories, but took us on several trips in his car to aid us in gathering other material. Mrs. Vogle gave us both help and cheerful encouragement. Mrs. Donna L. Mussel, the Sycamore librarian, whose courteous help was of great assistance; Mr. N. L. Henderson, who provided us with office space after we sold our home; manager Norman Heldt and his secretary at the Sycamore Chamber of Commerce; Ira Wetzel, Mrs. Charles Koehn, Mrs. L. A. Vaughan, and Mrs. John Erlenborn, Circuit Clerk Harriet Davy and her assistants, Miss Doris Anderson and Hjalmer Lund; also County Clerk Ralph Joiner and his deputy, Florence Buzzell.

The late William McGirk, whose personal recollections aided us a great deal before his death, which occurred during the summer of this project. Eric Nicolet, who gave us many tips from his excellent memory. Mrs. Ella Townsend, who loaned us material containing pictures, and gave us some notes for stories.

Mrs. E. V. K. Schwab was one of the VERY FEW who answered the 400 requests for stories we sent out in the mails in the early days of this project. Mrs. Jesse Driscoll, Sycamore; Hazel Schmidt of Cortland; and Mrs. H. L. Jennings, Sycamore.

The Sycamore True Republican and Tribune (Mr. and Mrs. Frank C. Dean and son, George), who made available their most valuable and historical news files, and from whom we acquired cuts for pictures. Many thanks to them.

The staff of the Chicago Great Western Railroad, Hayden Goodley, J. D. Schneider and Frank Anderson, all of whom helped us on our railroad story. Also Attorney L. B. Smith and last, but far from least, Circuit Judge, Cassius Poust.

Finally, the many who took time to ask us how we were progressing with our career as an author, and those who gave

us much needed words of encouragement. Many of them placed orders for our book, sight unseen. A type of confidence in us for which we humbly give thanks.

May we now present

OUR BOOK

* * * * *



photo courtesy of Edwards Studio, Sycamore, Ill.

Indian Summer on Somonauk Street in Sycamore near the Kishwaukee. The former home of the Potawatomes.

The green arches of our beautiful Elms and Maples have changed to glistening, sunlit gold, bronze and russet.

It is that last wistful time in between the change of the seasons. The close of a summer once again filling the horn of plenty, and the prelude to the long, grim drama of winter's gray cold.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page

Dedicatory Page

A Wish - - If It Could Only Be So

Preface

Color Frontspiece (Indian Summer on Somonauk Street)

Chronological Briefs - Sycamore Is Born - Our Mayors . . . 1

Our Churches - Page in Prelude 26

As Sycamore Grew, Methodists Kept Pace

Universalists and Congregationalists Merge

Great Rectors at St. Peters

Swedish Lutheran Church Story

Catholics Offered Mass in 1861

The First Baptists

St. John's, A Memorial

Israel of God (North Side)

North Avenue Baptists

Bethany Baptist

First Church of Christ, Scientist

Wonderful Old Bible

Prayer Poem by Hazel Schmidt

Prelude Page

The Smiles and The Tears That Pave Memory Lane Through The
Years 64

First To Have Electric Power 65

J. B. Whalen

Power Plant

First Electrical Home

Old Street Car

Missiles Defeated By Secret Weapon 74

Famed Whodunit At Electric Park 76

Beautiful Community Park Is Valuable 78

Police Chief And Wild Husband 84

Potawatomi Stew 86

Politicians Really In Saddle	87
The Ellwoods	88
First CNW and First CGW	90
Chicago North Western RR	
Chicago Great Western RR	
Railroad Humor	
Masons and I. O. O. F.	96
Genoa-Sycamore Car Line - It's Dreams - It's History - Humor	97
Old High School Escapades	102
Sycamore-DeKalb Rivalry	106
Former High School Burns	109
Poem - A Sycamore Mother Speaks	111
First City Water System - With Humor	112
Sane Holidays Good - But	114
Grand Parades On Memorial Days	119
South Side School Stunts	121
Waterman Hall	
St. Albans	
Sycobi Cage Teams	125
Unholy Rucus Goes To Court	127
Explosion North Of City	129
Real Quakes Rattle Sycamore	130
Wolves Treed A Boy	131
High Prices And Short Hours	132
Local Option And Blind Pigs	133
Sycamore's Mid-Winter Fair	138

Fred Rote, Barber	140
Firm Can Look Back 100 Years	143
Aged Man Shoots Chief of Police	146
Tells Tale of Trip	148
Small Pox Forced Sycamore Medic To Camp Out	150
City Learned Fire Fighting The Hard Way	154
Warning Unheeded	160
DeKalb Man Is Killed	161
Lumber Yard Saved	162
Falls To Death From Pierce Block	164
Pigeon Ranch Near Sycamore	166
Armory Here Is Used Much	167
Dog Trouble	169
Halloween Nite Adventures	171
Court Action - Mostly Serious - Except Now and Then . . .	174
Sheriff Had No Jail	178
Hectic Days In County Jail	179
Oil Leak in Tank	182
Small Boy Tells Sheriff To Go To Work	183
Post Office Is Scene of "Boom"	183
Community Center Important	185
Were Our 1929 Girls Too Heavy?	187
Falls Off Shovel Into Headlines	188

FDR Dines in Sycamore	190
FDR Closes Banks in 1933	190
Sailor Flirts Into A Battle Here	191
Strange Tales	193
Chandler's Cigar Plant - With Humor Attached	196
Crime Wave Ends	200
Our Guardsmen of Sycamore	201
Friday Nite Club	208
Nearby North Woods	211
Story Weird - "Dead Men" Revive	213
Laughter Echoes	215
Sycamore Lady Hears	219
To Pool Via Rail	221
Baseball Here Is As Old As The Game Itself	222
Bob Brown Pours Coal At Fire	224
General F. W. Partridge	226
Clerk of Our Circuit Court	
War Hero	
Then To Siam	
Townsend Should Be In Hall of Fame	231
Fred Raymond of Stage Fame	235
Laughable Tale of Fred and Taxi Ride	
Lou's Poems And Kind Heart	243
"Smoke" Is Greatly Missed	247
Third Ward Moms Lose Brooms To Golf	250
Lightweight Wins Middleweight Crown	255
Cyclone Johnny Thompson	

Dixie Sims	263
Superintendent Blanchard Badly Needed	267
First Woman Sheriff	269
Attorney Refused To Defend Son	270
Petrie Was Unique Cop	271
One Man Parade	272
Sad Character	273
Big "Abe" Ellwood	275
Billy Jewel's Life	278
Gross Family Had First Refrigerator	279
Home Made Breads	280
People: McGinty, Mitchell and Others	281
Laced Shoes of 1900's	284
Bits Recalled of 1917 and '18	285
Local Items About Troop Trains	288
Stories Told - Stir Smiles	289
Chamber is Forty-Four Years Old	292
Annual Chatauquas Enjoyed	293
Horse And Buggy Crashes	294
Our Election Board - Women	295
All Live Stock Destroyed	296
Tombstone Falls	297
Tries To Ship Baby By Parcel Post	297
Believe It Or Not - Library Burglarized	297

Tall Tornado Tangles	298
Plane Built Here	299
Wanderer Goes Into "Deep" Sleep	301
Sheley Saves Child	301
Under Snow Day And Half - Lives	301
City Hall Becomes Reality	302
Sycamore Area Hit By Twin Blizzard	303
Entire Family Dies From Gas	306
Girls Learn To Shoot	307
Saves Older Girl From Drowning	307
Only Instance of Deportation	308
Two Cannon	309
Fourteen Year Old Boy Is Hero	309
Banks Were Victims of Crime Wave	310
Lose Battle Against Sales Tax	311
Autumn of 1933 Tragic Time	312
Tom Was Eager To Learn More About Heaven	313
City Bands Not Supported	313
Series Tells About "Luke"	314
Just This And That	321
Women On Circuit Court Jury	327
Waited Six Years For Post Office	327
Vacant Lot Ball Games Are Gone	328
Young Mother Drowns	329

Bandits Bring In Chill	330
County Fair Held Here in 70's	331
Roller Skates To Taxis	331
Former CGW Depot Now Pretty Home	332
Discover 70 Year Old Drain	333
Recalls Officer's Combat Calisthenics	334
Major Hennis Tells Hospital Stories	335
Dot In Pacific A Meeting Ground	337
Famous "Dizz" Here	339
Two Hearses Carry Live Corpses	340
Young Lawyer Loses "Case"	341
Confused In Chaos	342
Other Sycamore People Wrote Books	344

SYCAMORE IS BORN
OUT OF BEAUTIFUL
WILDERNESS MOTHERLAND

1

Did you ever allow your imagination to dwell on the question of what life would have been like for you and me if this beautiful land in and about Sycamore had remained under the rule of Louis the XIV as it was in the 1700's? Yes, DeKalb County of today was once part of Louisiana and under the tricolor of France.

If we were under French rule today, it is quite probable that this community would not be named Sycamore. Sycamore young men disappointed in affairs a l'amour might be in Algeria serving with an element of the Foreign Legion. Also, local military units such as our National Guard Company, might be wearing baggy red pants and the cute little tin can style caps of the French soldat on parade.

Actually, however, the original owners were the Potawatomi Indians who lived in camps of wigwams along the Kishwaukee near what is now Kingston, and also near the area once known as Coltonville, west of Sycamore. As late as 1835 there were 40 tepees near Coltonville and also a beautiful Indian garden and burial ground.

It was in 1778 that George Rogers Clarke captured our present land from the British. He did so in the name of Virginia, so that we can say today that the land on which we now live was once part of the beautiful state of Virginia. Later, Illinois became part of Wisconsin. In 1814 Congress created Illinois and Wisconsin as two states, and in 1818 Illinois was officially admitted into the Union as a State.

DeKalb County was established on March 4, 1837. The county obtained its name from that of Baron Johann DeKalb, a German soldier who gave his life in the cause of the American Revolution. He was killed in the battle of Camdon, S. C., in 1780.

The name Sycamore is an English translation of the Potawatomie word meaning Kishwaukee, which referred to the Sycamore trees that lined our little river, also named Kishwaukee.

Both Indians and white men were easily drawn to this very beautiful land of vast mid-western prairie and forests in the early 1800's. A story of the birth and growth of Sycamore, like the sagas of the birth and growth of other towns and cities of

Illinois, is a fascinating tale of Indian lore, hardship, peril and courage.

Such a story must begin with the fact that a huge area from the Fox River westward in Northern Illinois was once Kane County. Out of it, as stated earlier in this chapter, DeKalb County and then Sycamore were born, but the wilderness gave birth to Sycamore before it did DeKalb County. Much of Sycamore's early history includes things of interest attached to the village of Coltonville and land west of there, but north of the Kishwaukee river.

A Town Is Born

Lysander Darling was the first man to settle in this area, but he chose a spot along the north bank of the Kishwaukee. That was in 1834 or '35. Several more New Yorkers joined him there that year and helped to set up a land grab for a New York corporation. That grab idea failed.

Late in the afternoon of March 14, 1835, Carlos E. Latin arrived in Sycamore, although it was not yet known by that name. He chose the south bank of the Kishwaukee. The next day he searched until he found a piece of high ground on a spot where the Johnston Chorister store is today. There he built the first cabin in what came to be the present city of Sycamore.

That first cabin was eight logs high, sixteen feet wide and twenty-four feet long. Latin was a bachelor at that time but he later married. After his marriage, he built the first frame house on what is now West High Street and in 1859 built the home that was later enlarged on the southwest corner of Somonauk and High Streets.

Builds Mansion House

The first major construction of a commercial nature was the Mansion House on the corner where the public library stands today. It was a hotel and banquet house built by Capt. Eli Barnes. With only a few cabins, houses and other structures in the settlement of Sycamore in that year of 1839, the Mansion House was considered huge, and was looked upon here as a wild and fanatical waste of money. People said it was doomed to failure.

The people were wrong. From the start, the hotel did a thriving business. Officials, both professional and economic,

as well as traveling salesmen, made the Mansion House a mecca that helped give Sycamore a great start in its early growth.

Later that building was moved across the street to a spot about where the present Post Office flag pole area is now. And when Uncle Sam condemned that entire corner and took the land for the Post Office, the Mansion House was moved north on Main Street to the intersection with Page Street. There it stood until February 1959 when it suffered a disastrous fire. In the spring of that year it was torn down.

By common consent, during the year 1839, the name of the town was changed from Orange to Sycamore.

In that distant day, as we look far back down memory lane across the prairies and virgin forests of this beautiful Kishwaukee area, we see a few log houses, the frame hotel and a few muddy streets as the infant Sycamore is born. No post office. No jail. No court house. No fire department and only an occasional meeting of a few citizens acting as a sort of governing unit.

Today the records in Washington show that the first postmaster was Rufus Colton. Apparently Sycamore's "post office" in the 1830's was part of a store in Coltonville. That brings us to the story of the coming of Rufus Colton to the mid-west. That story alone would make a wonderful pioneer movie or TV show.

- 1836 -

It was in 1836 that he and his family made the long trip from New York to Chicago by boat and stage. Although he bought property in Chicago, he did not like it there, and moved on to Joliet that same winter. In the spring he decided to go with his family to Coltonville, which had already been established. On a farm a block house had been built there.

Wolves and A Blizzard

There was no stage or railroad out of Joliet, so Rufus Colton hired a man, a team and covered wagon. Across the prairies and through the forests they started their journey - he with his wife and seven children. Arriving south east of Cortland (then known as Lost Grove) one horse gave out and died. It was night and a cold northeastern blizzard was blowing. Colton sent the hired man on to find help.

The teamster found his way to the Will Thompson place across the Kishwaukee from the Colton house. Instead of sending help to the stranded family, he told the Thompsons that the Coltons were lost on the prairie. He remained safe and warm at the Thompson home.

All through the night the Colton children were terrified as half-starved wolves howled around the wagon. Cold and frightened, the children thus underwent an ordeal typical of the hardship and peril surrounding the birth of a new land. Their mother kept them huddled under blankets.

Colton's Pioneer Courage

At dawn Colton decided something had to be done to save his family. He started out on foot in the blizzard. He found help and only then did he learn that they were only a little more than a mile from their destination. An ox team took them to their new home. It was a block house, 32 by 26 feet, with four rooms downstairs and a large chamber upstairs.

There was a frame school just west of their home. Mr. Colton paid the salary of the teacher out of his own funds that first year. He laid out a town and built a hotel. In 1839 his brother, Calvin arrived. Calvin took over the school and hotel. Across the road he built a store. In that store the first circuit court session of DeKalb County was held. There, too, the Sycamore mail was distributed. Rufus Colton acted as judge and postmaster for the wide area that included Sycamore, which was, for a short time, known as Orange.

Wonderful Letter

To the north there was soon a distillery and a brick kiln. Also, there was a then famous burial ground for a tribe of Potawatomie Indians who had an encampment along the Kishwaukee. In December, 1910, Mrs. Caroline Colton Akers, then living in Kansas, wrote a beautiful letter to someone in Sycamore which told of that adventurous arrival of her parents and family, and also described the garden the Indians maintained near her home. Mrs. Akers expressed the wish that millions of middle aged people have expressed for centuries - that she could once again live 'over her childhood days. She wanted to see again the fascinating prairies and that beautiful Indian garden.

It is interesting to digress or rather drop back a few years

at this point and remind the reader that at a spot west of Sycamore in 1832 or '33 there occurred a meeting of three men, two of whom were to become presidents and the third would lead a rebellion.

Fascinating

During the Blackhawk Indian War the then Col. Zachary Taylor, later the 12th president of the United States; the then Capt. Abraham Lincoln, later the 16th president; and the then Lieut. Jefferson Davis, later president of the ill-fated Confederacy, met to discuss the final phases of the capture of Chief Blackhawk. The exact spot is not known, but it was not far from Coltonville.

Lincoln was commanding a company of Illinois Militia. Colonel Taylor commanded Fort Crawford near Prairie de Chien, Wisconsin, headquarters for the war with Chief Blackhawk. Lt. Davis had been sent there by the War Department to aid Taylor in mustering recruits for the campaign.

Briefs

Now in swift succession let's follow Memory Lane in Sycamore from 1838 to the present, hitting only the highlights. In 1838 the county tax levy was \$216.50, but the deputy sheriff who served as collector could not obtain more than \$84.37. However that was the first tax levy. It was the last which experienced such a deficit.

- 1839 -

In 1839 much sickness prevailed. Many died. There were also many financial hardships.

Although Sycamore was named County seat in 1837, no formal court could be held because there was no courthouse. Court continued at the Coltonville store for a time. In 1839 Sycamore had two stores, a hotel and a few homes.

- 1840 -

Among the homes was that of Deacon Jesse Kellog. In his kitchen in that year a few Congregationalists met and decided that a church unit should be formed. In 1840 the first court house was built - 20 by 30 feet in size - on the south side of

State Street. Court was ordered held there, but upon arriving, the judge and attendants found the building had no doors or windows and only part of a floor. Court promptly moved back to Coltonville.

Later the new court house became a scene of the formation of the Congregational Church and services were often held there. Rufus Colton became officially the first judge. Joseph Lander was sheriff with no jail; and Lysander Darling, Treasurer.

- 1841-42 -

In 1841 Andrew J. Brown of Sycamore became the first lawyer in the county. The winter of 1841-42 was a long one with the first snow on November 8, 1841, and it remained in view until April, 1842

By 1842, Sycamore had 56 homes and a population of 262.

- 1849 -

In 1849 the DeKalb County Commissioners voted to build a new court house and county jail, but the county "senate" stipulated that the \$6000 needed for a jail, must be raised by the people, either by special assessment or by donations. The court house was built, but the jail project fizzled. The court house was in full use by 1850, but it was in 1856 before the new jail became a reality.

- 1856-57 -

In the winter of 1856-57 this area was beaten by a mighty blizzard. It was weeks before supplies could be brought into town. It became bitter cold, and much sickness, suffering and death followed. Also, there was much financial misery. Considerable livestock was lost by starvation.

- 1858 -

A major step in the growth of spunky little Sycamore in 1858 was its incorporation as a community of the State of Illinois,

- 1859 -

At a cost of \$75,000 of private capital a rail line was built

from Cortland to Sycamore in 1859. That was a huge sum in those days. More is told of this in a separate railroad story in this book.

- 1869 -

While there had been some industry here for several years such as the old brick kiln, a brewery and a cooper shop, it was in 1869 that Sycamore gained its first major manufacturing concern when the Marsh Harvester plant began operations.

- 1870 -

A DeKalb County Fair was held in Sycamore in 1870.

- 1899 -

Dr. Westgate, a woman doctor (a rare thing in those days), sparked the move which provided Sycamore with a \$25,000 hospital in 1899. That building today houses the Sycamore Elks Club.

Also in 1899, a new Baptist church was completed at a cost of \$9,000. It was dedicated that same year.

- 1900 -

On May 15, 1900, the Wilkins block was sold by the heirs of the Wilkins estate to Daniel Pierce for the sum of \$11,000. Later the block was destroyed by what was probably the biggest fire in Sycamore history up to that time.

That Wilkins block was the most prominent structure in Sycamore in that year, as far as buildings were concerned. Of course that 135 foot water tower was yet standing at the intersection of State and Main Streets. Both the Wilkins block and the water tower were removed within a few years of each other. Sycamore was shifting from the late stages of pioneer life on its grand march toward modern times.

It was on this burned out block that the present three story edifice which today houses the Henderson dry goods store and second floor offices, was built. The third floor is used largely for storage today, but it has an interesting little history. Many a romance blossomed into a later wedding as a result of waltzes enjoyed during the many public dances held on that floor. Mem-

orial Day Services, Church bazaars, and at least one year the Sycamore High School Senior Class produced its annual drama there.

A quick glance back down Memory Lane at a time before the Wilkins block burned, discloses that early in the year 1900 (or was it late 1899) an organization known as the Strangler's Club of 40 members was formed and created an elaborate gym in the Wilkins block. That gym boasted of 3500 square feet of space, a padded boxing ring where a former stage was located, a billiard room, reading room, handball court, auditorium, a dressing room, hot and cold running water, tub and showers, and electric lights. The dues were \$5 PER YEAR !

More of 1900

By 1900 the population of Sycamore had reached the all time high of 3300. In that year, too, the Sycamore postal department established the first three rural delivery routes in the city's history; and on August 21 of that year a tremendous storm struck this area. Many homes, buildings and trees were damaged or ruined by wind and lightning. A cloudburst added to the woes of the day. The baseball team of that season played sixteen games of which they won 12, lost 3, and tied one.

In 1903 the cornerstone of the present court house was laid. A celebration of major scope was staged with the Sycamore Masonic Lodge taking the leading role. A huge parade was a feature.

Down town State Street received its first paving that year and the entire city was happy to be, at long last, able to shop without wading through the mud after a rain.

- 1905 -

Most important event of 1905 was the coming of the Sycamore Public Library. Donation of the land for the structure was made by the town's leading philanthropist, Frederick B. Townsend. The City Council assured the cultural minded backers that taxes would provide for the upkeep, and a donation from the world famous Andrew Carnegie fund made the institution an assured thing. Now, in 1960, it is badly in need of another financial boost as it is severely overcrowded and is in need of more of the modern library equipment.

- 1910 -

We come to a notable year, 1910. The present county jail was built at a cost of \$53,000. A heat wave registered 101 in July that year. Cyclone Johnny Thompson sailed for Australia to do some prize fighting on a guarantee of \$5,000.

Sycamore High School graduated 17 and Waterman Hall (school for girls located where the Bishop McLaren Center is now) graduated 13.

The eighth annual chatauqua was held in Marsh Park where the new West Grade School is now. Congressman Fuller and James J. Garfield were chatauqua speakers that year.

On June 22 a mess of fireworks exploded in the window of the Thompson Restaurant on the south side of State Street where the Edwards Hobby Haven store is now located. The explosion raised an unholy din, a vast smoke and a fire. Because the force of the explosion broke out through the glass show window, the damage was done mostly by fire, water and smoke.

There was a tally of 70 autos here in that year. The chief of police's salary was increased to \$900 a year, but he still worked 12 hours a day.

The Sycamore-Genoa intraurban car line (gasoline powered) was completed. Cars ran every 15 minutes from 6:30 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. There is a more complete story about that car line in this book.

In July of this notable year, a band of women suffragists invaded Sycamore to help the cause that sought the right for all women to vote.

The Anderson-Ericson clothing store (today's Anderson-Rosene store) was selling suits \$10 to \$18 and overcoats from \$7.50 to \$18.

This advertisement appeared in the Sycamore True Republican: Wanted: Man past 30 with horse and buggy to sell stock conditioning powder in DeKalb County. Salary \$70 per month.

- 1912 -

In 1912 Sycamore enjoyed for a brief time, the innovation

known then as "air-dome" movie and vaudeville theaters. One was located at the corner of State and Main streets where Bob Niewold's Standard Station is today; and the other on the land where D. O. Thompson's apartment building is now on the north side of Elm street, between Somonauk and California. Now 48 years later, we have open air theater drive-ins in the rural areas.

- 1913 -

First parcel post packages were possible at the Sycamore post office January 1, 1913.

- 1914 -

Four years after Congress had appropriated \$60,000 for the purpose, in 1910, the present post office was built. The corner stone was laid in 1914.

- 1921 -

The year 1921 proved to be almost as big and busy for Sycamore as that exciting one of 1910. Early in January that year, Sycamore had its worst down town fire in many years, and worst all-over city fire in two years when the Oleson and Walrod Grocery & Drug store suffered a loss of \$10,000.

It was in this year, too, that Sycamore leaders met and began organizing the Elks Lodge. The same year, too, that the present Elks lodge home became a reality.

Elroy Bollinger was coaching SHS basketball. The team won 16 straight and lost the 17th to Geneva 21 to 14. On this squad were: Hanson, Weslake, Olson, Braidwood, Gustafson, Maveus, Rich and Pigott.

A new industry, that is still prosperous and thriving, although today it is under a new name, moved to Sycamore, built its plant on DeKalb Avenue, in that year of 1921. It was known then as the Hero Furnace Co., but is the J. V. Patten Company today.

Dr. Brown was elected mayor over Robert Lecky by the tally of 809 to 204.

It was this year, also, that first talks were indulged in

over the proposal to create a park. The voters failed to approve a \$25,000 bond issue to start the project.

Yea, verily, it was in that year that the Sycamore High football squad defeated Dundee by a score of 43 to 0 on October 1, 1921. "Chuck" Braidwood was captain. In that connection, it is interesting to recall that Braidwood later became the "Red Grange" of the university of Tennessee's grid team.

This was the year (1921) in which first steps were taken toward establishing the National Guard unit in Sycamore. That brought out the fact that Sycamore supported two companies of militia in 1875.

- 1925 -

When the expression, "busy years", is applied to Sycamore, the year 1925 is a MUST in any story of this city. Many very important events and actions took place. It all started almost as soon as the tiny New Year arrived, for it was in January that the city council voted to pave with concrete, sixteen streets in Sycamore. The city senate also voted the \$300,000 to do the job.

That started a court fight, but, in the end, the court backed the aldermen, and Sycamore became one of the best paved little cities in Illinois.

It was in 1925, also, that the old Citizens National and the Sycamore National banks merged to form the First National, and built the \$100,000 building that today houses the National Bank and Trust Company. The First National closed during the depression. For some years the building housed a grocery and restaurant, but they closed, and the present bank took over, remodeled, and is now one of the strongest financial institutions in the county.

It was in 1925, too, that the Pierce Trust & Savings Bank, then located in the Pierce Building, where the east section of Henderson's dry goods store is today, remodeled and held a gala opening. It was the Pierce Bank that later became the National Bank and Trust Co., referred to in the paragraph preceding.

In a separate section in this book, the reader will find a story of the birth and growth of the Sycamore Community Park.

For this paragraph, let it suffice to say that the park was dedicated with an extensive program on July 16, 1925. It was, at the same time, observing its first birthday.

The paving of Route 23 north to Harvard was also a major event of 1925. This big job started in May of that year.

Sycamore had suffered theater trouble during the previous years. Now, in 1925, H. B. Fargo helped build the \$115,000 theater building that operates yet today in spite of golf, bowling and television. It opened November 28, 1925.

Even though Sycamore people were happy to have their new park, and gleefully enjoyed its dedication, there was a bit of grief in the beauty spot of that year of 1925. Arthur Ecklund, 24, of this city, drowned in the lagoon swimming pool the evening of Monday, July 6.

He stepped off of a sandy ledge into deep water and could not swim. The only other people on the spot were two men friends, neither of whom could swim. There was no life guard on duty at the time. The tragedy gave birth to the rule that no one could swim in the lagoon unless a life guard be present. The reader is cautioned to remember that this lagoon was NOT the present modern pool that came later. It was nothing more than a pond fed by springs. Incidentally, the water level had dropped so far in 1959 that all park springs have dried.

It was in 1925, too, that St. Mary's Parochial School opened for the first time in September with 70 students.

All drives in Elmwood Cemetery were paved that year.

In the court house in Sycamore came the case of the State vs Mary Mier, 22, and her sister, Beatrice, 25, the first women ever to be tried for chicken stealing in DeKalb County. They were from Freeland Corners, and had made seven raids on south county chicken coops. Pleading guilty later, they were sentenced to 60 days in the county jail. Wags described the incident as a case of a couple of chickens stealing someone else's hens.

It was in 1925 that County Clerk Charles Talbot was forced to give up his campaign for re-election and also to resign, when the DeKalb County Board of Supervisors discovered irregularities in the office finances. S. M. Henderson, the clerk before him, was called in to take over.

Climaxing the interesting year of 1925, was the December announcement that H. B. Fargo would build a \$200,000 hotel. That hotel, which continues to bear his name, is today owned and operated by J. D. Ward.

- 1929 -

Although it wasn't realized, the depression was already creeping over the nation in 1929. That this was true can be seen by scanning the record of Sycamore activities that year.

Only four events stand out. Charles S. MacBrien, manager of the theater, bought the first privately owned plane in the area when he paid \$3500 for an Eagle Rock.

Route 64 paving was completed between St. Charles and Sycamore that year.

In August of 1929, there was a considerable exodus of the population southward to the area about Waterman, because the Graf Zeppelin, largest dirigible of that time, flew westward across that part of the nation. It was a German ship, manned by a German crew. It was on a flight around the world, the first round the world flight of an airship of that kind.

The first talkie movies were heard and seen at the Fargo Theater that year.

On January 11, 1929, the \$20,000 talkie installation presented the movie, "Melody of Love", starring Walter Pidgeon.

Biggest major commercial event of the year occurred when Anaconda Wire absorbed the Inland Wire & Cable plant of Sycamore, then located where Diamond Wire & Cable Co. is today.

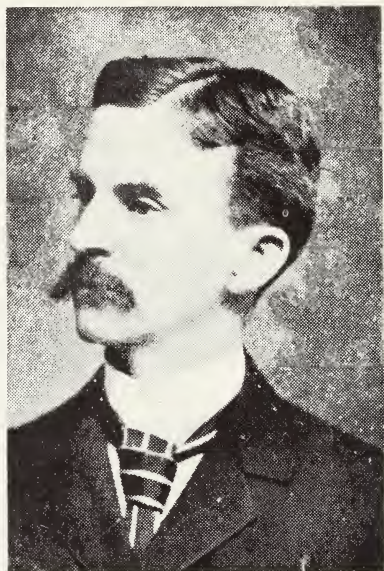
- 1930 -

In 1930, the effects of the depression were being felt more than ever and the CNW RR quit operations and removed its rails on the Cortland-Sycamore branch.

The Sycamore post office was held up at noon on June 13 that year.

Edward I. Boies, Sr., 70, died on October 13th that year. He had owned, edited and published the Sycamore True Repub-

lican since 1887. He was at his desk up to a few days before the hand of death took him.



E. I. Boies, Sr.

The True Republican is DeKalb County's oldest newspaper. It celebrated it's centennial in 1957. The first publisher and editor was C. W. Waite - from 1857 to 1862.

Next came Henry L. Boies in 1862, whose publishing and editorial career was ended by his death in 1887.

His son, Edward I. Boies, Sr., then took over as chief of the True Republican. Like his father before him, his long service to the community as citizen, civic leader and editor, was halted only by death. He was in his office chair up to a few days before sudden illness struck him.

For some years, Alvin E. Resch had been a partner with Mr. Boies in operation of the print shop and newspaper. Again illness and death changed the face in the publisher's chair. For a time after that, Mrs. Resch ably served as editor and publisher, but age and failing health led her to sell her interest to the present publisher, Frank C. Dean.

Today, illness has forced Mr. Dean to slow down in his editorial work, but his faithful wife and son, George, are carrying on with the same strong policies of integrity and good taste. Their work, as was that of the Boieses for nearly 70 years, is based on a faith in, and a love for, Sycamore.

County Judge W. L. Pond, one of the most interesting jurists of the long history of the DeKalb County Bar Association, died that year. He had been judge since 1898.

Robberies continued to plague the nation, and Sycamore suffered another that year when the Mera-Lee Dress Shop, owned and operated by the then Mrs. Jane Chatfield, now Mrs. Lindsley, living in California, was robbed of \$1500 in dresses. It was a night time theft.

- 1931 -

October 31, 1931, was a sad and gloomy day for Sycamore. On that day, the First National Bank of Sycamore closed its door permanently. It went into the hands of a federal receiver. The reader is cautioned that this bank did NOT have any connection with the present National Bank and Trust Co.

- 1935 -

The year 1935 rates only three major events in this chronology. During that year the Sycamore Methodist Church celebrated its centennial as an organization in Sycamore. At that same time, Sycamore observed the centennial of the arrival of Carlos Latin and his, the first cabin. The program, which centered around the church here, was headed by the appearance and sermon by Bishop Lynn Waldorf of Chicago.

In 1935, too, the new, concrete park swimming pool became a reality at the cost of about \$30,000.

- 1936 -

Promise of the completion of Route 64 in the next year was one of the features of 1936. The state assured Sycamore and other communities along the highway, that \$500,000 had been earmarked for the finish of the project.

A presidential campaign touched closely in this area when Alf Landon, Republican candidate for the presidency, paused in

DeKalb during his campaign tour. An estimated 10,000 people gathered at DeKalb to hear his brief talk as he passed through that city on the CNW.

Horse and Buggy Death

It was in 1936 that the last Sycamore person ever to be killed in a horse and buggy accident died on December 1, after he and his buggy had been crashed by a truck. He was the 75 year old John Waterman, who lived in Sycamore at 213 North Walnut Street, but for many years had continued to work his farm 2 miles north of the city on Route 23.

He was on his way home that evening. In December, night falls rapidly. Just south of the intersection with the old Mount Hunger Road, his buggy was struck in the rear by a truck. Because of the darkness, the truck driver had not seen the buggy until it was too late. The aged farmer apparently died on the way to the hospital.

- 1937 -

A strike at the plant then known as Turner Brass Works, but now known as Turner Corporation, was an event of 1937. A strike is a rare event in Sycamore, and it therefore became a most interesting topic of conversation. It occurred during ten days of March. When finally settled, the workmen received practically what the firm had offered during the early hours of the stoppage.

That the depression, at long last, was definitely ending became apparent in this year, when industries in Sycamore discovered that there was a shortage of labor in this area.



In the spring of 1937, the Sycamore High School faculty lost one of its most talented and greatly loved members when Miss Roberta Amrine retired. She had been 23 years on the staff, of which 19 were in the capacity of principal.

The present principal, Mr. J.B. Shrout was appointed as her successor.

The following headline appeared in the Sycamore True Republican in April, 1937 - - "Harness Shop Bows To Time." The story came from the fact that N. G. Truby, who had operated a harness shop in Sycamore for over half a century, decided to retire. In addition to his venerable age, Mr. Truby's reason for closing the shop was logical because of the lack of business. The automobile had arrived, and horses would never again return in great numbers.

Millie Thurm On Radio

Also in 1937, Sycamore was delighted to witness an interesting change in the entertainment world when 12 year old Millie Thurm of this city went on the air to sing with the then famous Ted Weem's dance band. She was heard over radio stations WBBM and WGN. Jack Patten, of this city, acting as her business manager, got her started on her short but brilliant career. The pretty little Miss gained much publicity as a result of her skill as a wee show girl. She still remains attached to the show world, but is now writing songs for others to sing over TV. In her early days she was temporarily slowed up in a tangle with child labor laws.



The photo on the preceding page is of Millie Thurm when, at the age of 9, she was just beginning a long career in the entertainment world. Her stage name was Marilyn Thorne, but she was christened Marilyn Katherine Thurm when she was born October 7, 1924 in Aurora, Illinois.

Jack Patten, now living in Wheaton, Illinois, has always been deeply interested in the musical side of show business and when he discovered Millie's voice, he gained permission to become her manager and feature her singing.

They early agreed on the stage name of Marilyn Thorne, and her first appearances outside of Sycamore were as part of a floor show at the Club Arcada at St. Charles, Illinois. This photo is of Millie in a Club Arcada costume.

Her nickname could have been Miss Music, as she has become firmly attached to the world of treble clef, arias and arranging notes that make hearts sing. She no longer sings for the show world, but writes songs. No doubt she is firmly convinced that: "There Can Be No Love Without A Song." We wonder how she enjoys that song when John Raitt sings it?

Here are a few of the many songs she has given the entertainment world: "All I Have To Give You"; "Hot Tomale"; "Oh Ho Mambo" and "All My Life."

Writing songs won her a place in the world famous "Who's Who." Once again her name hit the headlines.

She lives now at 1010 Sycamore St., Los Angeles, California. She was married January 14, 1942, to Joseph Hooven, and they have three boys, Joseph, Jeffrey and David.

Her widowed mother lives in Sycamore, also, a brother Charles, and a sister, Mrs. Clarence (Margaret) Henigan. Two other sisters, Mrs. Roy (Mayme) Swanson and Mrs. Rodney (Helen) Latimer, live in nearby DeKalb, Illinois.

Another outstanding accomplishment of 1937 was the completion of Route 64. It's official opening was fittingly celebrated in the fall of the year.

Official Washington declared the depression ended when much WPA and federal relief was ordered halted in 1937. This did not last. WPA returned for some time after this premature

demise.

Sycamore became the scene of another pleasing convention when the Illinois State Grange held it's annual conclave here. Again, temporary living quarters and dining places here were found to be inadequate for assemblages of that size.

- 1938 -

January, 1938, was just a week old when Sycamore people heard over the radio news, and later read of it in Chicago papers, that an American Air Lines plane had crashed in the rural areas near Newark, N. J. For a few hours, until all details were available, the Sycamore family and friends of Veronica Lalley, then 22 years of age, held their breath. She was the stewardess on that plane, and one of the first Sycamore girls ever to enter that glamorous work. It was later learned that all on board the plane were safe - just bumped and frightened. The plane had pancaked on a forced landing.

It was in January this year, too, that the FBI grabbed Pete Anders, the much sought for fugitive who was then alleged to have kidnapped and murdered the wealthy Charles S. Ross. Later Anders confessed and led the authorities to a Wisconsin cave where he had hid the body, and then disclosed that he had also murdered his confederate in the crime.

Sycamore had been a center of the investigation when this crime first took place the year before. Ross had dined at the Fargo Hotel the night of his disappearance. Many thought at the time that the bandits had carried out the crime from Sycamore. Police, detectives, and FBI men, plus Chicago newspapermen fairly swarmed in and around the Sycamore hostelry for days after the crime. The bodies were found in Wisconsin, so it is possible that the bandits did trail their victim through here.

It was also in January, 1938, that the Johnson furniture store and mortuary were damaged by a \$30,000 fire. The store was located where Gullberg and Haines now conduct a furniture store, but no mortuary.

In 1938, St. Albans School For Boys, located where the Bishop McLaren Center is now, closed it's doors as a school.

WPA grants were resumed after the threat of ending them the year before. As a result, city, state and county lunged for

hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of federal money with which to build things. Highways, landscaping of the park, and an addition to the high school all received federal help.

The Sycamore Community Park was cracking at the seams for want of space, and the board bought ten more acres on the southern edge.

St. John's Lutheran Church, a beautiful \$100,000 edifice, made possible by Paul Nehring, DeKalb-Sycamore industrialist, was dedicated June 12, 1938.

National Guardsmen moved into the new armory, although it had not yet been entirely completed.

Christian Scientists of Sycamore purchased the former St. John's Lutheran Church at Main and Exchange streets. It is now the First Church of Christ, Scientist, Sycamore.

In July, 1938, the Rockford Art Club hung an exhibit of paintings in the Fargo Hotel for a month.

Reverend (Captain) Frank H. Weichlein was promoted to Major, and retired because of age from his post as Regimental Chaplain, 129th Infantry, Illinois National Guard, ending fifteen years of ING service. The regiment staged a special review in his honor at Camp Grant that year.

- 1939 -

Among the outstanding events of 1939, after the year had been quietly under way several months, was the presentation of a new organ to the First Baptist Church by E. W. Joiner and H. G. Harms. Mr. Joiner was honoring his wife, who had been taken by death some time before. The organ was dedicated on Easter Sunday.

Nearing the time of retirement in 1939, Col. William F. Hemenway, then commanding the 129th Infantry, Illinois National Guard, was promoted to Brigadier General. His retirement came about by reason of the amputation of a leg, which had become infected. The General was then completing 36 years of military service, part of which was in combat in France during World War I. He had earned high regard by his courage and for his splendid attitude toward the men of his command.

Another highly respected and greatly loved person to be honored in this year of 1939 was Miss Roberta Amrine who had retired in 1937 after 23 years of high school faculty service, 19 years of which had been served as principal. (See photo on page 16). The graduating Senior Class of that year gave the high school a plaque which continues to grace the trophy halls of the institution. The plaque was created by the skill of one of her former students, Bernard Bodeen, then employed by the Turner Corporation, where the plaque was manufactured.

WPA, which had continued to survive, announced that SHS could be assured that its requested annex and general institutional modernization at a cost of \$85,000 had been approved. It became an event of 1939.

The new \$100,000 Armory, which had already become the home of Sycamore's Headquarters Company the year before, was dedicated September 19, 1939. Dignitaries of military and the state and county political world, along with Sycamore Chamber of Commerce officials, gathered in the edifice to hear the speeches and music marking the official acceptance of the big structure.

There was a mild but grim warning that war clouds were in the offing for Uncle Sam. It was in the fall of this year of 1939 that the 33rd Division, Illinois National Guard, staged its first autumnal combat training since World War I. The guardsmen entered into a series of weekend (Saturday and Sunday) field exercises. Some units trained near their home stations and a few at Camp Grant.

Lt. Col. Cassius Poust had been promoted to colonel and was commanding the 129th Regiment following Hemenway's promotion and retirement in 1939.

- 1940 -

The 14th of April, 1940, was an important date for the Congregational Church in Sycamore. On that Sunday the church observed its centennial with an impressive service.

April of 1940 brought about a most interesting change in the community's business world when Emil Johnson ended his furniture business. From then on he restricted himself to only mortuary service. It was the first time in the city's history that the mortician's services were separated from furniture sales.

In this year of 1940, too, the old West Bridge over the Kishwaukee on Route 64 was replaced with the present modern concrete structure.

Signs of war continued to multiply in the United States as the nations of Europe blasted each other with shells and bombs. In Sycamore the Headquarters Company was notified that the first mass maneuvers since World War I would be held. Camp McCoy, near Sparta, Wis., was to be the scene of mobilization of Guardsmen from Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and West Virginia. Instead of the customary two weeks, the field training period that summer was to be of three weeks duration.

On October 16, 1940, came the first registration of selective service, otherwise known as the draft. In Sycamore 683 young men between the ages of 21 and 36 were registered.

With the war in Europe not yet a full two years old, cries for war relief began appearing in the American newspapers. Many recall the barrel in front of Monty Bennett's shoe store where people dropped discarded shoes as a war relief act.

Added to the steadily mounting fears of Uncle Sam's involvement in the conflict was the news that the National Guard would be mobilized all over the U. S. in 1941. It was learned that Headquarters Company, 129th Infantry, would go with the 33rd Division to Camp Forrest, near Tullahoma, Tenn., early in the year.

Industry was already feeling the effects of the war in Europe. It was announced in Sycamore that Ideal Industries and Turner Corporation would both expand to meet the mounting war orders.

Storm Brings Death

November 11, 1940, was a gloomy day in Sycamore. Not only because of Armistice Day with its reminders of war danger that seemed to be crawling nearer day by day, but because of a very violent storm that struck the city that day and night. The abandoned home of the Lee Robinsons at 127 North Avenue was flattened by tornado-like winds. That evening, Lloyd Woods, a 52 year old railroad man, was blown under a moving train at the California Street crossing. He was instantly killed.

OUR MAYORS

Below are listed the mayors of Sycamore from the first up to the time of publication of this book. It will be noted that our first city leaders served only one year terms. This later became two years and remained so until the regime of Mayor Frank E. Ashelford. The term is four years now.

1869	Reuben Ellwood
1870	Moses Dean
1871	Richard A. Smith
1872	Richard A. Smith
	and John B. Harkness to fill vacancy
1873	John B. Harkness
1874	John B. Harkness
1875-76	Richard Divine
1877-80	Nathan Latin
1881-82	Charles Stewart
1883-86	Chauncey Ellwood
1887-88	Nathan Latin
1889-91	Abram Ellwood
1892	A. F. Matson to fill vacancy
1893	Dr. George Nesbitt
1894	Frederick B. Townsend to fill vacancy
1895-98	Frederick B. Townsend
1899-1901	David Syme
1901-02	James Brannen
1903-04	Frank C. Patten
1905-10	Dr. Olin H. Smith
1911-16	James D. Beckler
1917-24	Dr. J. C. Brown
1925-30	James D. Beckler
1931-32	Frank E. Stevens
1933-34	A. K. Stiles
1935-49	Frank E. Ashelford
1950-57	Emil Jespersen
1958	Harold Johnson

The name of Ellwood was a most prominent one in Sycamore's early history. Three of them were mayors, and one of that trio was a congressman from this district in the late 80's.

Reuben Ellwood was the first mayor of Sycamore, serving from 1869 through 1870. His brother Chauncey also filled that office. His terms dated from 1883 through 1887. It is of interest that Chauncey Street on the city's south side was named after him. His home was located at the northwest corner of Somonauk and Chauncey streets. The same estate is now owned by M. Sgt. Esther Mae Nesbitt, Washington, D. C. It was Chauncey, too, who served as congressman for several years.

A son, Abram Ellwood, was the third member of that great family to serve as mayor. His service was from 1889 through 1892.

For many years a showplace, the home of Reuben Ellwood was located where the Hotel Fargo is today. That home was a large, two-story, red brick residence decorated and furnished in a style and beauty that made it something to be proud of in that era.



REUBEN ELLWOOD
Sycamore's First Mayor



OUR CHURCHES

Rev. and Hon. Levi Lee, Methodist minister and one of DeKalb County's first commissioners (now known as supervisors) is said to have preached the first sermon in the county, in or near Kingston, on September 5, 1835.

Subject of his sermon was:

"HAVE FAITH IN GOD"

* * * * *

Someone among our posterity who was blessed with a very strong spiritual outlook on life said, "A community is judged by its churches."

* * * * *

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; It is the gift of God; Not of works, lest any man should boast. - Eph. 2: 8, 9.

* * * * *

As Sycamore Grew,
Methodists of City Kept Pace

In the home of Mr. and Mrs. Mark Daniels, about a mile north of Sycamore on what has been known for many years as the Frederick Townsend farm, was held the first Methodist service in Sycamore township. That was in June, 1836. Levi Lee of Kingston, Methodist pastor of that community, was invited to conduct the service and preach. Reverend Lee had preached the first sermon in DeKalb County at Kingston the year before.

It was in September of that year also that the first quarterly conference of Methodists in this area was held in Sycamore. And at that time the first baptism in Sycamore was held. Reverend Stephan R. Beggs baptised Caroline White, daughter of Edward and Mary White. Caroline was born August 1, 1836, in a covered wagon. She was also the first white child born in Sycamore township, and was believed to be the second white child to be born in DeKalb County.

Circuit Rider Pastors

During 1837 a new log school house was built about four miles north of here. It was in that school house that the first genuine Methodist church service was held. It was also the first school in the township. The religious services were held every four weeks and were conducted by a circuit rider.

It was in 1845 that the Methodists moved their services from the school house into Sycamore and into the old court house that stood across the street from the present court building. In the early 1840's, two cemeteries were prepared in Sycamore, one at the southwest corner of Somonauk and Waterman Streets and another on East State Street where the high school campus (of 1959) is today. In 1865 the graves were opened and the bodies removed to Elmwood Cemetery.

Carlos Latin, who built the first log house in Sycamore, donated land for a Methodist church which was built in 1847 near where the present one now stands. It was a building 37 by 45 feet in size and was the first church building in Sycamore. That church was later moved to State Street and a few of its timbers are yet a part of Art Taylor's garage.

A second church was built in the same general vicinity in 1865 at a cost of \$14,000. It is significant, yes, perhaps im-

portant, that in the years 1869 and 1870 the Baptist and Congregational churches combined with the Methodists to conduct the first union services ever held here. The conclaves created a much friendlier feeling among the three that remains to this day.

From A Few To 1,000

In 1908, while Rev. E. G. Clattermole was pastor, a third (the present one) church was built. In 1923, under the pastorate of Rev. James O'May, the church annex was built. In recent years that annex was enlarged and remodeled to accomodate the greatly expanded Sunday School. In 1925 Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Lackland gave the church a new organ and new piano.

The Rock River Conference of Methodist churches was held in Sycamore in 1881 and again in 1934. Rev. Arthur W. Mohns was pastor during the 1934 meeting which drew pastors, lay delegates and bishops from all over the nation. The Methodist church, Community Center and Fargo Hotel were key points of the conference. Living facilities were taxed to capacity here. In fact, rooms had to be secured in nearby towns as the conference was almost too much for a town the size of Sycamore. However, Sycamore people welcomed the conference and have always looked back on it as one of the most pleasing events of its long history.

One of the more interesting people to be a guest was a bishop from the deep south, a negro. He was interesting chiefly for his costume, for he came in frock coat and top hat, overflowing with dignity. His sermon, while not spellbinding oratory, was well received.

And so this church grew with Sycamore from a membership consisting of six families in 1836 to over 1,000 members today.

Among its older members it was said that the pastorate of Rev. Claude Moore was one of the more interesting of the many valued ministers of the church's 123 year history. Those who knew him, and learned to think a great deal of him, describe him as having had a wonderful personality. He was magnetic to young and old. Even among adults he had a class of 100 men which was marked as exceptional. His love for children was returned by the little folk in a heart warming degree. He enjoyed a four year term from 1902 through 1906.

Horses In Belfry ?

Interesting among the stories that make up the human interest side of the church's history is the description of problems facing the ladies who wished to provide church dinners or suppers without the benefits of today's modern kitchen equipment.

The women found it necessary to climb up into the belfry to obtain saw horses and planks to form tables on which to work and dine. Water was carried in buckets after pumping from a nearby well and stored in wash tubs in the church. The church had no stove and no ice box or other means of preserving foods.

Gift Inspires Worshipers

Most beautiful of all gifts to the church was the great oil painting, "Christ In The Garden". The painting was created from an original by the brush, easel and skill of one of the church's most interesting members, Esther Mae Nesbitt, daughter of the late Dr. and Mrs. John Nesbitt of Sycamore. Esther Mae did the painting and presented it to the church as a memorial to her mother. It was presented and dedicated during the pastorate of Reverend Morgan, who served here from 1940 through 1942.

It hangs directly behind the pulpit so that it becomes a most sacred inspiration to all who attend the main section of the church.

Proud Of Growth

Five of today's members have an average membership time of 65 years. They are as follows: Evangeline Shattuck Claycomb, whose membership dates from 1886; Mrs. Edith E. Young and Miss Elberta Betty, each dating her membership back to 1893; Mrs. E. G. Cooper, from 1898; and Ira A. Wetzel from 1905.

From a mere handful of members in 1836, the church had grown to a total of 1,335 in 1959. It's Sunday School also has shown a remarkable growth from the small group of youngsters of 123 years ago. The Church School in 1959 could feel proud of 413 children and 116 youth for a total of 529, plus an adult class.

Universalist and Congregational
Now The Federated

Long and detailed research has pointed vaguely to indicate that people of the Congregational denomination were among the earlier religious groups to gather together in Sycamore before 1840. Brief work was found which reported that a few Congregationalists gathered in the kitchen of the home of a prominent citizen, Jesse C. Kellogg, and devoted their words, thoughts and prayers to God and their own future. That may have been about 1836 or 1837.

Later they were to meet for organization and hold services in the old court house. And still later, by sacrifice of every kind, they built a church. Prior to the building of their first church, they acquired a regular pastor, Reverend David Perry.

In 1845 the Universalists of this community met and began planning their future also. In 1854 they built their first church.

It was in the vicinity of 1927 or 1928 that the Universalist and Congregational Churches united to form the present Federated Church.

Letters Emphasize Sacrifices
of 1841 Pastor and People

Several letters written in 1841 and 1842, on being read today, emphasize two outstanding characteristics of church life for pastors and members of religious groups of a century ago. The letters were official and tell of the sacrifice of the first pastor of the First Congregational Church of Sycamore and also relate how members of the churches of that distant day, even as of now, were apt to give stronger consideration to the practical events of their daily life than they would to their church.

The first letter is dated March 24, 1841. It was written by Jesse C. Kellogg, prominent Sycamore citizen and one of the charter members of the Congregational Church. It was addressed to Rev. F. Bascom, Agt., American Home Missionary Society, Chicago, Ill. Mr. Kellogg, in behalf of the Congregationalists who had organized in 1840, asked the AHM Society to help the Sycamore group to acquire a permanent pastor, but the language is quaint and most fascinating.

In it's early paragraphs it reads in part: "the First Con-

gregational Society of Sycamore now deem it their solemn and imperative duty to ask of your munificent society an annual appropriation in aid of a stated gospel ministry at Sycamore. The society (containing five male and nine female communicants) at their organization authorized a pledge to the Home Missionary Society, for the term of one year, to commence as soon as the services of a minister could be secured by trustees, Two Hundred Dollars, one half cash and the other half in good mercantile produce delivered in Sycamore. This sum (Two Hundred Dollars) is already subscribed in the anticipation that the Home Missionary Society will grant us Two Hundred Dollars more and thus enable us to sustain a pious, faithful and talented minister with a salary of Four Hundred Dollars per year."

The letter went on to say that a Reverend Mackey, who had attempted to act as pastor, had become too feeble to continue, and that he had been the only Presbyterian and Congregational minister in DeKalb County, which now had a population of about 2000 souls.

And in the next lines Deacon Kellogg wrote as deacons might be expected. He became piously dramatic - "Will not the Great Head of the Church who has said, 'Ask, and it shall be given to you,' pity our forlorn and destitute condition, and through the instrumentality of his faithful servants, open 'Windows' in the 'Heaven' of benevolence, that 'Righteousness' might rain upon a languishing church and a perishing people?"

The bearded clerk, trustee and deacon, J. C. Kellogg, then wrote to briefly describe Sycamore. He told of the beauty of "this small community which is surrounded on three sides (all except the south) with groves of excellent timber."

He paid tribute to the Methodists with whom the Congregationalists were very friendly, saying that, "there were about 60 of them and they were served by a circuit riding pastor every two weeks in the court house, and that about 16 Free Will Baptists were meeting in Ohio Grove about three miles away."

Mr. Kellogg made no attempt to cover up the fact that a pastor in pioneer territory would not have an easy time. Here is what he penned at the close of his first letter of appeal: "We have no particular minister in view, but most earnestly entreat your Society to grant us the appropriation and send us at once a Congregational minister of ardent, unaffected piety, and solid rather than brilliant literary acquirements; one who can endure

with his people the privations and hardships incident to the infancy of society, one who can tear the mask from the visage of skepticism, illustrating, enforcing and defending at the same time the blessed truths of our holy religion, is needed and would be preferred by this destitute church and people."

We have not sufficient space in this book but to mention the fact that the Deacon added a two-paragraph post script to his intense appeal.

Announcement And Second Appeal

In a second letter dated November 8, 1841, the good deacon reported that Reverend David I. Perry, of the state of New York, had arrived about July 1, and had accepted their offer of \$400 a year. Again Mr. Kellogg made strong verbal effort to the Executive Committee of the A. H. M. Society in Chicago for its long standing promise to provide the Sycamore Congregational Society with \$200 toward the new pastor's salary. He also asked the Chicago church heads to officially commission Reverend Perry as regular pastor at Sycamore.

In some more dramatic terminology he mixed reference of the church destitution with great optimism. About one third of the way through his second letter he penned the following: "Thus far the prospects of the little church and society appear encouraging. . .we have much reason to hope that ere long the little church will shine forth in this community "clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners. . . .as in the city full we not only ask your alms, but your prayers."

Pastor's Sacrifice

On April 1, 1842, the Reverend David I. Perry must have used an entire day - or perhaps he used even more, but did not change the date - to prepare a letter report to the Chicago chiefs of the American Home Missionary Society, specifically addressed to Rev. M. Badger and Rev. Chas. Hall. It contained slightly more than 2000 words.

The first part of the lengthy treatise told of his desire to conduct a pastorate in pioneer territory. He admitted that his move to Chicago in June of 1842 was contrary to the advice of friends. He left his family consisting of his wife and 8 children in Chicago while, as he put it, "I spent some time in rambling through the northern part of the state. I fell in with Sycamore

and found them with a subscription of \$200 and encouragement from your society to support a minister. The church consists of twelve members, the greater part females."

At Last, A Home

He realized that privations were ahead as he wrote: "I concluded to forego my own inclinations and even the wishes of my family for the sake of preaching the gospel." The Sycamore people had not yet provided for a home for the pastor. He and his sizeable family were forced to live in a small log cabin that summer with the promise by the congregation that after the harvest they would build him a home of proper size.

Reverend Perry's judgement told him that the overly ambitious people had bitten off more than they could chew on that promise, so he freed them from the obligation. During this trial of worry, and at a time when he was almost ready to accept a more pleasing offer elsewhere, one of his sons was given the opportunity of taking over a farm near the village, and the home was large enough to accomodate the whole family.

He added in the letter that the people seemed to have all they could do to take care of themselves without adding the burden of a church and pastor to support, but he did not complain.

There was no church building as yet. The little congregation held services every two weeks in the court house. No prayer meetings were held, and he indicated in the excellent report, that he was having trouble with his effort to inspire his flock with urgent spiritual activity in between Sunday services two weeks apart. As he put it, "It was a gloomy business."

And now came a more bitter pill. He reported that there had been a long battle over the location of the court house and that Sycamore had won. Reverend Perry expressed sadness over the discovery that his members were more concerned over retaining the county seat than they were about their church. He was indicating, of course that what little money and influence they had to offer was going toward the court house project rather than sharing it with God and church.

In the winter of 1842, just when things seemed to be reaching the bottom of the pit of gloom, his friends, the Methodists, provided a series of prayer meetings and his own people joined with them. That joint spiritual action apparently gave the Con-

gregationalists a lift and in some ways things began to improve.

Denominations Battle

About half way through the long report Pastor Perry related what to him must have been a most disturbing incident, but as we read of it today it brings smiles. Some of his members gained his cooperation to conduct a communion service on one Sunday in the spring of 1842. As usual it was to be held in the court house.

What they failed to take into account was the fact that the Universalists had also intended to hold a service in the court house at the same time, but the Congregationalists arrived and began their service first.

Reading between the lines, a reader of 117 years later can deduct that a terrific hullabaloo then occurred, for this Gospel-loving Pastor of the Congregationalists goes so far in his letter to report that there was loud cursing and swearing. He added in smug contemplation, however, that he did not feel too bad, since he had actually had no part in arranging the conflicting services.

He added that some of the church members were startled and that he convened them by themselves during intermission and calmed them with words of the Lord. Later, the Universalists conducted their service and two sermons were preached. Reverend Perry admits he did not hear the orations, but he said "I learn that it is the opinion of some that the Universalist doctrine was a splendid failure."

Second Letter

In a second letter the hardy minister reported that his congregation had grown from 11 when he arrived to 29 in 1842. He also wrote that politics had interfered to draw his people's money and interest away from the church effort.

One cannot help but feel warm respect for this man who had endured so much, because he had the courage to ask in this second letter for the right to serve another year. He mentioned the brighter side of the picture in his final words; he reported that at last he had a home, and that even though it was small, it was comfortable. He also indicated that he had great hopes for the future of his church.

Enemies Worship As One

And now look at the situation in 1960. The Universalists, who once fought with the Congregationalists on a communion Sunday a century ago, are merged with their enemies of 1842. Today, 118 years later, these two denominations comprise the Federated Church.

As Frank C. Dean of the Sycamore True Republican once wrote in his famous "Local Color" column, "Nothing is so constant and sure as change."

Salary Appeal Is Officially Made
By Worried Church

Sycamore, P.O. DeKalb Co., Illinois
October 14th, A.D. 1842

To The Ex. Comm. of the American Home Missionary Society:

The undersigned, being now able to redeem the pledge made by the Trustees of the "First Congregational Society of Sycamore" for the support of our minister here during the past year, and being able to give you his certificate to that effect, would renew their application to your munificent society for aid in securing the labors of the Rev. David I. Perry for the term of one year commencing August 1st, A. D. 1842. We wish to make up for him a salary of four hundred dollars for that term. We have raised by subscription to be paid to your missionary in cash or produce at cash price, one half at the end of six months and the remainder at the expiration of the year, two hundred dollars. We now solicit from your society an appropriation of two hundred dollars to make up the deficit. We have done all that we feel able to do, "Men and brethren help."

(signed) Jesse C. Kellogg
Horatio F. Page
Erasmus Hamlin
Trustees 1st Congr. Society in Sycamore

This is to certify that the Trustees of the above society have arranged their pledge to me of last year of two hundred dollars to my entire satisfaction.

(signed) Sycamore, Oct. 14, 1842
David I. Perry

Troubles Mount With Struggle To Build Church

On the eleventh of April, 1840, when the Congregational Church was founded, twelve people formed the congregation. Not until six years later were the first steps taken toward the construction of a church building. Services were held either in the court house or in Deacon Jesse Kellogg's kitchen.

There was nothing ornate or awesome about the services of that time. The communion service, for example, consisted of some member's dinner plate, a plain water pitcher, and two plain tumblers.

It was Captain Eli Barnes, the first courageous "capitalist" of Sycamore, who boldly and successfully went ahead to build the town's only hotel and dining room, located where the public library is today. He donated the land for the proposed construction of the first Congregational church in Sycamore. Barnes owned that entire block of land at this time. The site he provided is the spot where the First Church of Christ, Scientist is located today.

The deed, recorded on the ninth of November, 1846, conveys the property to "Trustees of the Congregational Church for a meeting house forever."

A wave of serious illness struck this area in 1846. After the timbers for the church had been hauled into place and construction started, the work was forced to a stop for a year. When work was resumed, the people ran out of funds. Again the construction came to a halt. For two winters and the summer in between, the church sanctuary so bravely begun, stood unfinished, an unsightly skeleton of what its members had so dearly hoped for.

But eventually the church was completed. The record of December 21, 1849, reads: "Church met in the new house of worship, recently plastered and made quite comfortable." The battle had been won. Under the date of December 27, 1851 the record reads: "Voted that our house of worship be dedicated to the Triune of God on the first day of January A. D., 1852."

Proud of Pastors

Several pastors of both churches come to mind when the

merger is given over to reminiscing. Also, excerpts from a letter from W. P. Dutton of Winnipeg, Canada, former Sycamore resident and uncle of the present George Dutton, are very cheerfully recalled with perhaps a nostalgic tear added.

Dr. Millar, for some years pastor of the Universalist Church, was one of the most kind-hearted and generous pastors in Sycamore history. He is remembered dearly not only for his efficiency and effort as a pastor, but also for his "beyond the call of duty" efforts in behalf of the Sycamore Hospital of his time - the early 1900's. He kept up an almost constant plea for financial help and labor in an untiring effort to bring comfort to the sick and injured, both in and out of the hospital. He made "faith, hope and charity" really living things during his time.

Dutton's Story

Some years ago W. P. Dutton, then living in Canada, wrote to tell some of the incidents of his boyhood, which was lived during the time when the Universalist Church was very active. From his youth to his adult years before leaving Sycamore, he was a most faithful and active member of that church.

He recalled that his donation to Sunday School every Sunday was two pennies. He says that only once did he fail to get the two cents to its proper destination. Being in a hurry that particular Sunday morning, he jammed the pennies into his mouth while attempting to hurry into his pants. Something went wrong and in the excitement he swallowed the pennies. Consternation reigned and fear developed. There was much talk and scurrying about. A doctor was summoned. However, in his late years, he seems to recall that the pennies forever refused to come up or go down.

Promoted ?

Dutton was made librarian for the Sunday School and, as he put it, did such a careful and meticulous job that he was quickly promoted to janitor. He seems to have held the latter job longest. He wrote of the two huge furnace-like stoves then used to heat the church during the winter. It was his job to start the fires Saturday afternoons. Then on Sunday morning he had the "honor" of arising before dawn to stir the fires and add more coal. If there had been a snow storm he had the "fun" of shoveling walks and steps. Steps were many, as the first floor

was probably 20 feet above the sidewalk. He could then hurry home for breakfast and prepare to attend Sunday School or regular church service, often both. Oh, yes. He had to dust the pews before he could go to breakfast.

Then, as if the lad had not yet had enough of a workout for one day, he had to be back in the church to ring the bell at 10:00 A.M. Service began at 10:30, and that meant one more bell ringing job. Possibly he had a bit of rest in the afternoon, but there was another bell ringing task at 6:00 P.M. Sunday evening telling of the Young People's Meeting at 6:30. Then, once more, he rang the bell for the regular 7:00 adult service in the evening. Busy little guy, eh?

Remembered and Loved

As he grew older and found a better voice, Dutton joined his father in the choir. He added in his letter that his family had the distinction of having a grandfather, father, son and a brother in the Universalist choir in a range of years that lasted over half a century.

Some very prominent names are seen as one takes a long, wistful and sad look down the corridors of Memory Lane to view the congregation of the long disappeared Universalist Church. There was dapper Daniel P. Wild, best-dressed of the men, passing the collection plate for what must have been almost a generation of years. Mr. A. D. Gates, who at one time owned the Pierce block, was a prominent and important member of the choir. Mrs. Eleanor Pierce Townsend and Mrs. Mary E. Stevens, beloved in memory, too. It was Mrs. Stevens' wish that a fund left in her estate be used to build a new church. But the congregation became so small and costs were mounting, that a new church would be far from practical, and might even end in a real loss.

Court action was taken, and it was ruled that the money be used for creating a Community Center. The old church was used as a nucleus around which the Center, as you see it today, was built. Also, the splendid Stevens Lecture Series (concerts included) is a gift out of her estate.

Dr. Roblee - Outstanding

Two pastors of the Federated and Congregational Church quickly come to mind, as we look back. They are Dr. Henry

Scott Roblee and Reverend Harold L. Michael. Reverend Michael terminated his services on July 1, 1960. More about him later.

Henry Roblee and his bride entered Hillsdale College, in Michigan, in 1880. In 1894 he received his Bachelor of Philosophy degree. By 1911, he had earned his Doctor's degree in Divinity. In 1908 he answered a call to the Congregational Church in Sycamore, serving three years. In 1924 he was recalled and remained here ten years.

In 1934 he resigned and retired from the ministry. He had been wed almost 55 years and had been a pastor for 50 years. His final sermon here, which is yet remembered as a great oration, held the packed church spellbound. His topic that day - "50 Years On The Firing Line."

Reverend Michael

Reverend Harold L. Michael came to the Federated Church July 1, 1937, when he was 36 years old. After coming here he worked, studied and pleaded, earning gray hairs and a vast number of friends. He raised his family here, and saw them step away into their own family and professional life. He has, happily so, become a grandfather. He was here 23 years and became the dean of the entire Sycamore ministry as to length of service to his church and community. It is with regret that his church and the community at large saw him leave.

He received his Bachelor of Philosophy degree from the University of Chicago in 1923. While there he earned a letter as a member of the famous Coach Amos Alonzo Stagg's track team. In 1925 he graduated from Chicago Theological Seminary obtaining his Divinity degree.

Following that he held pastorates in Pringhar and Hampton, both in Iowa. He established a wonderful record at his church at Hampton, but left there to go again to the University of Chicago, this time to gain his Master's degree. After serving at the West Chicago Congregational Church for two years, he was called to Sycamore.

The service of Dr. Roblee and Reverend Michael, when combined, totals 36 years.

Great Rectors Are Mark Of St. Peter's Episcopal Church

St. Peter's Church of Sycamore has a history of over 105 years, as far as the Book of Common Prayer is concerned. It was during the summer of 1855 that several people who believed in the Episcopal form of faith met with Rev. Julius Waterbury of Batavia for that first prayer service held here.

On April 21, 1856, Reverend Waterbury, who was a missionary priest from Batavia, led the Sycamore Episcopalians in officially organizing St. Peter's Church in this community.

On July 1, 1857, this newly organized group dedicated its first church building. The Right Reverend Henry John Whitehouse, Bishop of Illinois, presided at this service. That little church cost \$2,500, of which \$1,000 was contributed by the citizens of Sycamore, another \$1,000 was given by James S. Waterman, and \$100 was given by Bishop Whitehouse. Mr. Waterman also donated the lot for the building.

The Generous Watermans

In 1858 the church had become self-supporting, and the first rectory was built in 1872. The lot for this structure was also given by Waterman.

The James S. Waterman family was one of the city's most prominent families of that day and did a great deal for their church. It was this family that made possible the Waterman Hall School for Girls that is now the Bishop McLaren Center. So, it is not surprising to find that it was James S. Waterman who met the total cost of building the second church.

At a cost of more than \$19,000 the church, which is yet in use on its Somonauk Street location, was built at Mr. Waterman's expense. Furnishing the interior was accomplished by the labor and donations on the part of the congregation. The pastor (known as the rector in Episcopalian church parlance) at the time of construction of the new edifice was Rev. W. E. Toll. The Right Reverend William Edward McLaren, Bishop of Chicago, presided at the dedication.

In 1910 the second rectory was built during the rectorate of Rev. William E. Glanville, Ph. D.

On November 19, 1958, the Church dedicated its brand new \$59,000 Parish House which replaced the former Guild Hall. The new Parish House is a memorial to the late Rev. Frank H. Weichlein, who was rector at St. Peter's for 2 separate terms. His first was from 1922 to 1924 and his second was from 1935 to 1950. Reverend Weichlein, therefore, had the honor of serving St. Peter's longer than any other rector in the church's history - a total of seventeen years. It is interesting to note here the effects of inflation. Remember their second CHURCH cost \$19,000. The Parish House - not a church - cost \$59,000.

Bishops and Educators

Two rectors of St. Peter's, Rev. W. E. Toll and Rev. Charles L. Street, were later honored when they became Suffragan Bishops of the Chicago Diocese.

Another rector, Rev. Frederick Clifton Grant, after leaving here, rose steadily as a theological educator. In 1956 he was serving as Professor of Biblical Theology at Union Theological Seminary, New York City, N. Y. Dr. Grant is considered a New Testament scholar of great knowledge, whose renown goes beyond the Episcopal Church.

Another important Episcopal institution in Sycamore was Waterman Hall, a school for girls which later became St. Albans school for boys. They are topics of separate stories in this book.

Also, in another separate story is the life story of one of St. Peter's famous vestrymen, Brig. Gen. F. W. Partridge.

Feathers Replace Baton

Members of St. Peter's today recall General Partridge as a man of considerable ego. According to the old timers here, he wanted to have much to say regarding the church and its affairs. They remember him also for his church-going apparel, which consisted of a long black coat such as ambassadors wear for ceremonials, dark, formal trousers and a dignified hat. A black cane with a gold knob added aristocracy to his costume. He was stern in appearance, tall and broad-shouldered, with the stride of a foreign monarch.

Mrs. E. W. Varty, who was Lottie Lovell before she was married, was choir leader in the church at one time. Formal

choir caps were worn. But one sunday morning, in a late arrival to services, she forgot her cap.

The style of that particular time for street or dress wear required huge plumes, flowers and feathers for m'lady's chapeau. Hence the choir was led that Sunday with the bobbing of plumes and feathers, much to the humor of everyone present, but much to the embarrassment of Mrs. Varty! After the choir had finished its part, she slipped out the side door and dashed for home, without so much as saying "good morning" to anyone.

Swedish Lutheran Church Story
Tells Of Steady Growth

Although many Swedish people, mostly young men searching for work, visited the Sycamore area in its early days, few remained in the vicinity very long. This is why the history of the Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sycamore does not have as early a beginning as some of the community's other churches.

In 1861, about 50 Swedish people gathered for the first religious meeting, but the meeting failed to blossom into any definite action. It is interesting, however, that the Salem Church of today still has in its possession the minutes of that original meeting.

Not until 1870 did the Swedish people here become organized. Rev. A. Hult of DeKalb's Swedish Lutheran Church came to Sycamore on April 4, 1870, conducted a service and supervised the organization of the first church congregation here. At this first meeting the constitution adopted in 1861 was read, revised and re-adopted. Rev. Hult continued to come here to conduct services in the old court house and in private homes.

No Money - Build Anyway

In that same year, showing great courage, the 50 charter members voted to go ahead and build a church. With their great faith in God, it didn't seem to matter that they had no funds. They sought donations and acquired \$200 for the building fund.

Christina Nelson of Sweden, a star vocalist of her day, had come to the United States to give concerts. Some of her relatives lived in the Sycamore area and succeeded in inviting her to come here to give a concert for the benefit of the fund.

Christmas Day, 1870, is down on Salem's records as one of the greatest Christmases in the church history. Miss Nelson gave two concerts that day in Wilkins Hall, which is so often referred to in any Sycamore history. The Wilkins Building was located where the Henderson building (Pierce Block) is today. \$628.36 was realized from the concerts - a large sum in 1870.

The Salem Church was built midway in the block on the south side of Charles Street and west of Somonauk Street. The structure was 32 by 50 feet and cost \$3,300. It was dedicated

April 28, 1874, but was not completely finished until 1875. A debt of \$1,164 remained.

When Reverend Hult resigned, Rev. Nordgren succeeded him, and again one pastor cared for both the DeKalb and the Sycamore church.

Then, when the Sycamore church asked Reverend Nordgren to move to Sycamore, DeKalb's churchmen refused. This split the DeKalb and Sycamore churches permanently. Reverend Nordgren was offered a large salary to leave DeKalb and come to the Sycamore church, but he refused.

For a time the Sycamore Church was served by local laymen, and students from the seminary at Paxton, Illinois. On July 10, 1878, Reverend S. G. Larson became the first regular pastor of the Sycamore church. During the pastorate of Reverend Larson the church was incorporated. This occurred in 1881.

Again Vote To Build

When the seven busy years of Reverend Larson ended, the Rev. M. Frykman was called, and shortly before Christmas, 1885, he assumed his responsibilities here. The church realized during his pastorate that the fast growing congregation and Sunday School required a larger church.

And so, just like that, the church of today (1960) was built. It is 46 by 90 feet in size with a tower of 117 feet and its cost was \$16,094. At its dedication on Sunday, February 28, 1897, there remained a debt of \$5,000, which later grew to \$6,000. However, the cost of the church did not include the organ nor the \$600 bell. These were gifts from the Young People's Society of the church. It is interesting to note that Reverend Frykman was president of the Illinois Conference of the Augustana Synod and therefore conducted the dedication rites for his own church. In 1898 the Illinois Conference held its annual meeting in the Sycamore church.

When Reverend Frykman ended his service here, he had completed 23 years of active duty and had greatly endeared himself to his congregation. His term here was the longest and one of the most fruitful periods for any pastor of that church.

He was followed by Reverend Albert Okerstrom, who came

here in May, 1909. Two problems saw solution during his time in the Sycamore church. Up to 1908, the only language spoken during services and in Sunday School classes was Swedish. In 1908 a beginner's Sunday School class was introduced to English. During Rev. Okerstrom's time, English became more and more the language for both the adult church services and the Sunday School as well.

Beautiful Picture Painted

The second thing that marks the story of Dr. Okerstrom's term here was the liquidating of the \$6,000 debt. This event was observed with a deeply moving service which he conducted on Thanksgiving Day, 1911. High Mass was followed by a dinner and climaxed in the evening with a musical program.

In 1913 the picture of Jesus leaving the tomb, that one sees on looking toward the altar, was painted by a Mr. Grafstrom of the art staff of Augustana University.

In 1914 the Salem church was the scene and headquarters for the 55th annual meeting of the Augustana Synod of Lutheran Churches of the United States of America. It drew over 400 delegates and is one of the outstanding events in the history of this church.

Rev. Raimus A. Lundquist who came here as pastor in 1937, pointed up patriotism in 1942 when he resigned to enter the United States Navy as a chaplain.

By 1958 the congregation had grown from 50 (in 1861) to 801, and its Sunday School from a few to over 316 children.

All Night Worry Fizzles

Among the humorous notes uncovered with this brief history is an incident related by Mrs. Harold (Grace) Welander. She laughed in telling of it even though she played the "leading role" in her night time adventure. It happened in the 1940's when a dinner meeting was held at the church. Mrs. Welander had charge of some of the kitchen operations. She says that after it was all over and she had dropped her weary self into bed, she got to worrying about whether or not she had turned off the electric current under the water heater. About three o'clock in the morning she decided that worrying wouldn't let her sleep, so she dressed and walked all the way to the church (she lives

at 325 West Ottawa). Trying to get into the church, she found the doors locked. With grim determination to save the church from possible fire, she tried to enter through a window and finally managed to crawl and tumble into the place through a basement window - only to find that someone else had shut off the heater!

As recently as 1958 the church choir was thrown out of gear and harmony when the pipe organ sounded off key. Investigation disclosed that owls had set up housekeeping in the organ pipes. The hooters didn't make much noise, but they created a "beeg steenk." The pastor was heard to comment the next Sunday on the remarkable and sudden improvement of the choir.

It will be of interest to many to know that parts of the structure of the first Salem Lutheran Church building of 1870 were used to build the homes of the Harold Fredricks at 240 Charles Street and the George Yorks at 244 Charles Street. In this day of scooters, autos and buses, it is humorous to recall that the hitching yard for church members, young and old, was in the area now occupied by the Eugene Doyles at 230 Charles Street.

Reverend Williams was a very highly respected and greatly loved pastor of the Salem Lutheran Church for the eight years, 1929 to 1937. It was with deep regret that his congregation saw him leave. Yet they can never forget his absent-mindedness.

Several incidents, none too serious, may be recalled. Although enough to cause a smile even in that day, today they bring genuine laughter. There was one day he drove his car into Chicago. After completing his business, he came home on the old Chicago Great Western passenger train. The next day he found it necessary to go back to Chicago to retrieve the car.

But the winning event was one which probably caused considerable of a family discussion. The Reverend and his wife motored to Joliet to attend a ministerial conference. The conference having ended, he climbed into his car and headed for Sycamore. At Geneva he paused for gasoline and he-a-er decided that it might be a good idea to return to Joliet. Otherwise he would have no wife to get his breakfast the next morning. You see he had forgotten that she was with him on the trip.



Thou Art A Priest Forever

"To live in the midst of the world without wishing its pleasures; to be a member of each family, yet belonging to none; to share all sufferings; to penetrate all secrets; to heal all wounds; to go from men to God and offer Him their prayers; to return from God to men to bring pardon and hope; to have a heart of fire for charity and a heart of bronze for chastity; to teach and to pardon, console and bless always, My God, what a life! And it is yours, O Priest of Jesus Christ!"

LACORDAIRE.

Catholics Offered Mass Here
In The Old Court House - 1861

Before 1862, Catholics of Sycamore attended Mass in the old court house. Reverend Patrick O'Dwyer of St. Charles conducted the first Mass, and continued to do so until 1862 when Sycamore's congregation joined DeKalb's. In that year, too, the first Catholic church was built.

By 1885 the church had grown to such an extent that it required its own pastor, and Fr. P. A. L. Egan was named as its priest.

During the pastorate of Rev. W. J. Meehan, from 1899 through 1903, a new church was built at a cost of \$22,000.

One of the outstanding priests with years of fruitful service in Sycamore was Rev. S. J. O'Hara, who was here from 1909 to the time of his death in 1922. He was the first pastor to serve St. Mary's after it was shifted from the Chicago Diocese

to the Rockford Diocese. Included in the numerous improvements at St. Mary's during Father O'Hara's service, was the construction of a mission church, St. Michael's. in Clare.

St. Mary's Busy Years

Rev. D. D. Miller came to Sycamore following the death of Father O'Hara. Under Father Miller's leadership a \$40,000 school was built.

Rev. P. S. Masterson came to St. Mary's in 1927. Death terminated his service in 1945. During his pastorate the Clare mission church was discontinued, and its membership was re-assigned to Sycamore. During Father Masterson's splendid service, a new rectory was purchased and prepared for use, and the old rectory was remodeled to become the convent for the teaching sisters. The project of redecorating the church was nearly completed when death ended his career.

Reverend Clement W. Caine was named to St. Mary's in 1945. As this book is being prepared, Father Caine is in the midst of a major project calling for preparation of a new, larger convent, enlargement of the school, and outstanding and beautiful changes in the church interior. Included in the latter are new altars imported from Italy.

During Father Caine's years, the church and school have almost doubled in size. In fact, it became necessary a few years ago to furnish him with an assistant pastor.

An important part of St. Mary's church in Sycamore is Mt. Carmel cemetery. In 1891 Rev. Michael Foley, pastor here at the time, led a program of considerable improvement in the cemetery. Over \$1,000 was collected by him to meet the cost.

On September 8, 1891 the cemetery was consecrated with great solemnity and given the title of Mt. Carmel. The ceremony was conducted by the Most Reverend P. A. Feehan, D.D. He was assisted by Rev. Patrick McGuire, Belvidere, Rev. A. Goulet, St. Charles, and Rev. Anthony Royer, Maple Park.

First Records

Records show that the first baptism was that of Anna Allen, daughter of John Walker and Sara Allen, born January 6, 1885. She was baptized August 9, 1885, by Rev. P. A. L. Egan.

The first marriage: Joseph Swinbank and Mary Crystal, October 26, 1885. The witnesses: Salathiel Crystal and Mary McGough. Rev. P.A.L.Egan, officiating pastor.

The First Baptist Church Of Sycamore
Busy And Proud

As this is written, the First Baptist Church is 108 years old and continues to be an important strength in Sycamore's spiritual life. Its centennial was fittingly observed in 1952.

The church had its beginnings in about 1849 when the Baptist movement, as far as DeKalb County was concerned, was born in Franklin Township. In 1852, eleven people met in the Franklin school to form the First Baptist Church of DeKalb Co. In 1856 it was thought best to move the organization to Sycamore.

The first meetings in Sycamore were held, like those of several other congregations of that day, in homes, in schools, and in the old court house.

The completion date of the first church building, a wooden frame structure, is not on record. Years later, after the present edifice was built, the original Baptist church became the Guild Hall of the St. Peter's Episcopal church.

Second Church in 1899

In 1899 the present brick building was built at a cost of \$9,000. The last of the debt in payment for it was paid off in 1906.

Outstanding among the people who did much in one way or another to bring the church and its people through early and difficult times, were Deacon and Mrs. Benjamin Allen. They had begun their Baptist worship in Virgil, but that group broke up in 1856, part of the group uniting with Maple Park and part with Sycamore.

The Allens were financially capable of aiding the church in its early struggles and did so. They also left a trust fund which has helped time and again down through the years. Finally, their will provided a gift of a substantial amount to be donated on a given date. The exact date, however, is not available for publication.

At the first meeting in 1856, a Mr. Kingsley was selected as pastor. It is said that Rev. A. Miller, one of the later ministers here, practiced medicine while serving without fail as pastor. At one time, another pastor was offered \$200 a year! His

family consisted of a wife and nine children.

Pastor when construction of the present building started was Rev. L. L. Cloyd.

In these later years the pastor who seems to stand in the greatest spiritual stature is the Rev. M. W. Johnson. He served here for fifteen years and earned hearty praise for his splendid leadership.

Tangle In Worship

The most laughable incident offered by the church historians fails to recall names, but the story is good just the same. In the early 1900's, the ladies' big hats were held to their large masses of hair by long, hefty hat pins. (Incidentally, the hairdo of that day often included balls of hair called "rats" around which the long hair was wound in large round rolls.) Two good ladies, on this particular summer Sunday morning, sat close together in a center section church pew. During the service they irreverently engaged in a bit of whispering. When they leaned toward one another, their hats, hat pins and hair became entangled. How long they were forced to sit in this awkward position is not remembered. Several attempts to become detached failed.

At the close of the service, these two were objects of much mirth as the members watched them arise together and, with their heads yet close together, leaning toward one another, make their way slowly outside where help was obtained. Needless to say, they were very weary when it was all over. The story continues to be handed down although it is nearly half a century old today.

In Memory Of

The most poignant story of recent years, and one which emphasizes the deeply religious spirit of the people of this Baptist church, came in 1939. In that year Earl W. Joiner (long time County Clerk of DeKalb County) and Bert Harms, (local businessman) presented the church with a new pipe organ. The presentation was made in memory of their respective wives, the late Gladdys J. Joiner and Myrtle D. Harms.

It is also a credit to this church that several years ago two of its young men, Martin Jensen and Frank Carter, Jr. were ordained into the ministry.

St. John's Is A Memorial
To Mother Of Paul Nehring, Sr.

One of the most beautiful memorials in Sycamore is the Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. John. It was made possible by Paul Nehring, Sr., of DeKalb, a former Sycamore man, who met the majority of the \$100,000 construction cost. His gift is a memorial to his mother.

Today Mr. Nehring is a well-to-do industrialist of DeKalb, but in his younger days he resided with his parents in Sycamore. Mr. Nehring announced his initial gift of \$50,000 and promised more if needed. At the same time his wife gave the Sycamore church their former home here, which is located directly across from the church. Mr. Nehring also bought and gave to the church the land on which the beautiful edifice stands.

First Sermon 1876

On May 28, 1876, a little flock of German Lutherans met with Reverend H. H. Norden of Hinckley to hear the first sermon ever preached to them in this township. From that time on, for several years, Rev. Norden conducted occasional services, held in homes or in the jury room of the court house. On December 10, 1876, the group was officially organized into St. John's Lutheran Society of Sycamore. The title was changed on April 25, 1940, to its present name.

This new religious organization of Sycamore acquired its own church in 1876, when it purchased for \$1,300 the former Congregational Church and land located at the southeast corner of Main and Exchange Streets.

The first regular pastor for St. John's was Reverend A. F. Parge, who answered the call in 1909. During the next few years several pastors served. After the resignation of a pastor in 1928, the Sycamore church requested Reverend H. E. Tessman of the Genoa German Lutherans, to accept the double responsibility of ministering to the Sycamore church without as yet giving up his Genoa pastorate. And he accepted.

In 1936 the church fittingly observed its 60th anniversary. Then in 1937 Reverend Tessman became regular pastor here and resigned his Genoa responsibility. It was in that year, too, that although they had only \$1,000 in donations at the time, the people decided to build a new church.

It was then that the Nehrings came forth with their great gifts. When completed, it was and still is one of the most beautiful church buildings in Sycamore, built in the English Gothic style, of Wisconsin Lannon stone. The sun's rays in the afternoon, beaming through the art glass windows at the head of the chancel, seem to be entwined with hymns of choirs and organ tones. These windows were created by master craftsmen in Pennsylvania.

The new church was dedicated June 15, 1938, with impressive services that drew a great throng.

Pastor Loses Son

On January 6, 1946, Reverend Tessman resigned after 17 years of service in the Sycamore church. One event that probably led him to resign was the tragic loss of his son, who gave his life in military service in the Pacific Theater of World War II. Previous worry and the shock of the official notice of the flyer's death helped to undermine his health for some time.

St. John's has enjoyed a steady growth in its membership. From the little flock of 1876, the congregation had grown to 500 by January 1, 1959. Its Sunday School had 200 at the time of preparation of this book.

Israel Of God Church
Few In Number But Great In Character

The Israel of God White Horse Army Church on North Avenue in Sycamore has several distinctions that give its pastor and its people something of which to be proud. This church is remarkable in having had only two pastors during its entire 52 year history. It is the scene of the annual national conference of White Horse Army church people. And last, but not least, its people built a new church in 1954.

In 1908 Bishop George Flowers organized a few followers of the White Horse Army faith who had come to reside in Sycamore's North Avenue area. He preached its first sermon and continued to head the church until his death in 1923.

Bishop In Long Tenure

Immediately following Bishop Flower's death, Bishop W. M. Jones succeeded him and, as this book is being prepared, is still in charge 37 years later. Bishop Jones has therefore served as pastor longer than any other pastor of any church in the history of Sycamore. He attended the first conference of White Horse Army people ever held in Sycamore, in 1910. He took a liking to Sycamore and was pleased to accept the pastorate when it was offered to him 13 years later. The good Bishop came here from Danville, Ill.

In the early days, the national conference was held in chosen communities throughout the nation. But in 1918 the conference in regular session voted to make Sycamore its permanent annual meeting place. Thus, annually, during the summer, several hundred lay delegates and pastors gather here to study and to solve their problems.

Build Church - No Debt

In the 1950's, the White Horse people of Sycamore decided to build their new church. It was completed in 1954 at a cost of \$74,000. The church was fully paid for upon its completion, something very few churches can enjoy.

The total membership of Sycamore's North Avenue people has been kept at an even level down through the years. But what this group lacks in number, it makes up for in the strength of its faith in God and in its future.

Baptists Of North Avenue
Build Two Churches Without Debt

The North Avenue Baptist Church, just like many other churches of the early days, began with services in the homes of its faithful, sometimes with and sometimes without a pastor. This was the case during much of 1907, but in 1908 a pastor arrived, and a church was built.

Reverend Baldwin came to Sycamore's north side from Chicago in 1908 and remained here for about three years. It was during his pastorate that the first church was built. Land was obtained from the late J. C. Joslin, who headed the DeKalb Ogle Telephone Company for many years. The first service conducted by Rev. Baldwin was held in October, 1908, in the home of Angelin Jackson. The church was built and opened soon after this.

A committee consisting of Mrs. Jackson, Mrs. Day, Mrs. Bertulis, Mrs. Eugene Sims and Mrs. William Jones worked long and hard in an effort to raise funds and to take care of other matters connected with that first church building. Of this very ambitious group, only Mrs. Jones survives.

Build Second Church

As the church story unfolded, the people on the north side were eager to emphasize that many others in Sycamore helped to make the church possible, not only with cash donations, but in other ways. Even today, with a second new church in use, the people on the Avenue expressed their appreciation for the help given them in the struggle to build that first little church 52 years ago.

In 1933 Reverend Victor Harris became pastor and continued in that capacity until his death following an accident in 1952. It was during his long and helpful service that the second church was built. In 1941 the first little church was torn down because it had become too old. Like the first church, the second one has no debt. It was entirely paid for upon completion. Land for the new church was donated by Eugene Sims.

Annual Meeting

The most interesting and anticipated time of the year for the North Avenue Baptists is the annual northern Illinois meet-

ing held in Sycamore on the fourth Sunday of each April. Reverend C. E. Monroe, pastor since the death of Reverend Harris, has a busy time leading the active preparation for the annual session. Pastors and members gather here from many northern Illinois cities, such as Aurora, Elgin, Geneva, Rockford, St. Charles and others.

Calvary Baptist Church Ends When DeKalb-Sycamore Merge

Just east of the Golden Harvest Motel between DeKalb and Sycamore, a new church has recently been completed. It is the home of the Bethany Baptist Church, formed in 1959 by the combining of the Calvary Baptists of Sycamore and the Grove Street Baptists of DeKalb. The story that follows concerns only the former Calvary Baptist Church of Sycamore.

On July 12, 1888, seven people met in the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Vogue to discuss the formation of a church. A visiting pastor arranged for the baptism of six of the members, the service being conducted in the First Baptist Church here. Following the baptism, the group adjourned to the Vogue home and completed their organizing, voting to name their organization the First Swedish Baptist Church of Sycamore.

Build Church

For a number of years, student pastors conducted services here for the little group. Their first regular pastor was Rev. C. L. Swanson. While holding the pastorate here, he continued his religious studies at the Swedish Baptist Seminary in Morgan Park near Chicago.

By 1891 the little group, which had grown from six to nearly forty members, desired a building of their own. And here once again, tribute can be paid to the late Fredrick B. Townsend. Although he was not a member of the church, he donated a lot to the small congregation which was so steadfast in its faith but lacked financial power. The new church was built at a cost of \$1,190, and was dedicated June 14, 1891.

Change Name In 1928

Reverend Oranger came here April 1, 1928. During his pastorate, the name of the church was changed to the Calvary Baptist Church of Sycamore, and also the services were changed from Swedish to English. Reverend Oranger ended his services here in 1931.

In 1945 the church underwent expansion and rehabilitation at a cost of \$4,000.

From time to time down through the years the Grove Street

Baptist Church of DeKalb and the Sycamore Church shared pastors - that is, one pastor served the two churches. In 1958 the two church boards began a period of study and prayer to determine whether or not a merger of the two into one church might not be advantageous to both.

Vote To Merge

Early in 1959, a proposal was placed to a vote of both congregations. Their combined total vote, when canvassed, showed that 90 per cent were in favor of the merger. On May 1, 1959, the two churches ceased to exist, and a new church with the official title of Bethany Baptist Church, Inc. was thus born. Reverend Gerald Winkleman of the former DeKalb church became the interim pastor.

Reverend Walton Veurink was the last pastor of the Sycamore church. He answered a call to new work near Grand Rapids, Michigan.

In July, 1959, the new church issued a call to Rev. James Pasma of Holt, Michigan, who began his service with the new church in September of that year.

One member of the former Calvary Baptist Church, Everett Swanson of Chicago, entered the ministry and is now doing missionary work. For some time he has been working in Korea.

A member of the former DeKalb church who was born and raised on a farm near Malta and who has been a missionary teacher on foreign shores for some years, is Edith Willey, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harry M. Willey.

As this is written she is teaching English in a school in Ethiopia. Her address at this time was Box 127, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, East Africa. Her birthday occurs on September 9. She has spent nine years teaching and in missionary work and is expected to complete her second term there in May, 1961.

Discover Some Humor

Two bits of humor were uncovered in the research for this story, one of which is absolutely unique in any church realm of the world. Some years ago, one of the ushers at the Calvary Baptist Church became a bit disturbed over the fact that a seat in the rear of the church, supposedly reserved for him, was

constantly being used by others - and WITHOUT his permission!

He finally decided to take drastic action. Wiring that seat, he attached a battery in such a manner that anyone but himself who sat there would be electrically informed that more comfortable seating could be found elsewhere in the church. One might say that the usher sort of arrived at the seat of the trouble. The voltage served as an electronic sermon on seating and solved the problem beautifully - with laughter.

Non-believers Howl

In the only instance of its kind during 72 years, the church became the scene of a howling uproar during a Sunday service. It seems like something taken from a comic section of a newspaper, but it actually happened. A dog chased a cat down the center aisle, temporarily halting the service, while members used force to eject the four-legged non-believers.

Sycamore regrets losing the Calvary Baptist Church, but the community recognizes the fact that in unity there is strength, and in this day of rising costs, churches have more and more financial problems. The 184 members that make up this new Bethany Baptist Church will have a finer church home and will enjoy a more interesting and satisfying life than the two small units struggling for existence.

First Church Of Christ Scientist
Well Established

In the year 1923, a small group of people interested in Christian Science met to hold informal services in their homes. In January, 1924, this group formally organized itself as a local branch of the mother church, the First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston, Massachusetts, and was known as the Christian Science Society, Sycamore.

Rooms were rented in the Odd Fellow Hall, located in the Masonic Building, where the church services and Sunday School were held every Sunday morning. Testimonial meetings were conducted on Wednesday evenings, and a Reading Room was maintained.

In 1938 a church building on the corner of Main and Exchange Streets, the oldest such structure in Sycamore's history, was offered for sale. The building had been begun in 1844 by the members of the Congregational Church and completed by them in 1846. Later in 1885, it was purchased by the St. John's Lutheran Church and used by them. Mrs. Eleanor Gochenour, a member of Sycamore's Christian Science Society, purchased the building and presented it to the organization. Extensive repairs were made, and a Reading Room was added to the structure.

On July 2, 1939, three services were held, dedicating this church, which was free of debt. At this time, the organization was incorporated, becoming the First Church of Christ, Scientist, Sycamore, Illinois. Since this time, the organization has held Sunday services, Wednesday evening meetings and Sunday School. It has also maintained a free public Reading Room and given a free public Christian Science lecture each year.

Wonderful Bible Proudly Owned
By Mrs. Frank E. Lee

Mrs. Frank E. Lee, widow of the late Frank E. Lee, who operated a book store and news stand in Sycamore for years, is proud of the large and interesting Bible handed down through the Lee family for nearly a century. It was temporarily lost in 1959, when she moved from the large apartment house on south Somonauk Street that has now become a convent for the Catholic Nuns. So naturally she was greatly pleased when the Bible was found and returned to her. It had been tucked away in the attic of the big home.

The book was published by the New York Bible Publishing Company, whose address at that time was 358 Broome Street in New York City. The first of its features noticed by anyone picking it up is its weight - fourteen pounds. Some of that weight is in its thick covers; exactly what substance is inside the covers is not known, but it feels like wood or metal. The outside is of beautifully engraved and embossed leather with gold lettering. Its 2,200 pages are edged in gold also.

Vast Coverage

The Bible contains both the old and new testaments. It is described as self-interpreting and is a virtual encyclopedia of Bible lore. It includes an introduction, a table of contents, a history of the old testament, a section of steel engraved scenes of Bible lands, engraved pictures of Biblical cities, a section devoted to manners and customs of the people of Bible times, and a biblical dictionary.

It also has a section devoted to the natural history of the Bible lands describing and picturing animals, birds, plants, herbs, and trees; a chronological index of scripture history; a history of religious denominations; a most interesting description of Solomon's temple; a collection of similies contained in the scriptures and synonyms, terms and phrases found in the Bible; a concordia of the old testament; and a final 23 pages in fine print presenting the Psalms.

Of the entire Bible, 1380 pages are devoted to the new testament. Just inside the back cover are two heavy pages intended for family photos. All through the book are glossy pictures in color of many religious scenes and people of the Bible. (Color pictures were described in those days as "illuminated.")

On page 1060 of a section devoted to family history, is found the marriage of Charles Lee and Catherine Blanchard, an event which occurred at Bellville, New Jersey on March 3, 1837. The interesting documentary page is signed by Rev. Abraham W. Myers.

Author Honored

Rev. John Brown, minister of the Gospel at Haddington is listed as the author, while Rev. Henry Cooke, DD, LL.D., is listed as having edited the great volume. A centennial commission and bureau of awards is said to have awarded the author and editor a diploma of honor and a medal for their skill and effort in preparing the monumental work.

Originally the Bible could be locked shut with two large, heavy brass clips, one of which remains.

It must have taken years to prepare this Bible as it is almost a christian education in itself. Certainly it must be of considerable value due to its age, size, and many fascinating and interesting characteristics. It is indeed something to be proud of.

Hazel Schmidt, Box 23, Cortland, Illinois, has always had an aptitude for the printed word. She likes to express her romantic or spiritual moods in poetry.

Below is one of her more recent gifts, which aims to cheer those who might be sad or worried at one time or another.

I'LL SAY A PRAYER FOR YOU

Doesn't it make you feel happy?
When you hear someone say
Those tender words, "I'll say a prayer
For you, my dear, today."

Troubles fall like magic,
The skies begin to clear
When you hear these precious words
That are so very dear.

We can't always be happy,
Free from worry and care,
But we can spread a little joy
Along the road here and there.

And if we would say, to all we meet,
And not to just a few,
The words that speak of faith and love,
"I'll say a prayer for you",

This world would be a happier place.
I'm sure we'd find it so.
There would be more smiling faces,
A lot less trouble and woe.

We now begin to pave Memory Lane with flagstones made of human interest and laughter - -



The old Sycamore-DeKalb street car carried thousands of shoppers to DeKalb and hundreds of students to Northern Illinois State Normal School, which later became Northern Illinois State Teachers College and today is Northern Illinois University. The car line also carried uncounted numbers to ball games and to Fourth of July and Labor Day celebrations at Electric Park, a mile southwest of Sycamore.

The cars were olive green in color and the later models were quite speedy as far as speed was known in the early 1900's. There was a separate compartment for smokers and, since the women did not smoke those days, it was considered highly ill-mannered to smoke in the regular passenger section.

It was in the smoker of a car one winter morning in 1922 that Byron Shaw baptized C. R. McLagan with his present nickname of "Luke." McLagan was forever telling funny stories he had read in the paper or magazines. Snow chose the name of a character in the funny paper of the old Chicago Journal. The cartoon character was "Luke McGlue." As Snow climbed on board that morning he greeted McLagan with a "Hi there, Luke McGlue." The name stuck and McLagan still gets his mail addressed with that moniker.

Introduction of electric power to Sycamore caused a tremendous change in the life, speed of growth and recreation of the community. A monument, or some other form of memorial, should be set up for the late John B. Whalen, as he was the power behind the coming of "Reddy Kilowatt" to Sycamore and the county.

Sycamore was the first town in DeKalb County and one of the first in all Illinois to have electric power. This was because Whalen was farsighted enough to see the huge potential in light and power even while electricity was in its infancy.

Through the efforts and financial aid of Mr. Whalen, in 1889 Sycamore gained its new power plant, located in the alley behind what is now the Newman Building on the south side of State Street. Whalen was not only instrumental in getting the plant for the city but he was also its first general manager. His home at 134 W. Ottawa St., was the first one in Sycamore to be wired for electric lights. Later, for some years, this was the home of Judge Carnes, one of DeKalb County's famed jurists, and for 30 years, the present Circuit Judge Cassius Poust and his family resided there. It is now occupied by the D.V. Seymour family.

The Old Streetcar

One of the outstanding memories in connection with electric power is the old Sycamore-DeKalb streetcar known as the intra urban. It made its first run on June 10, 1900. But the coming of the automobile gradually starved its business, and it quit running in 1927. In later years the rails were torn up in both DeKalb and Sycamore. The first motorman and conductor was Andy Betty - but more about him later.

At least one Sycamore man today remembers the building of the car line. James Crosby of 743 West State Street has an excellent reason for the memory. He and E. J. Austin of Maple Park had the contract to deliver rail ties and electric power line poles for the entire length of the line, a considerable undertaking in those days. There were no motor trucks or power cranes in that era. Horses, wagons and men's muscles did the job, and on time.

In 1899 a power firm in DeKalb which had been inaugurated in 1891 merged with the Sycamore firm, and the corporation thus

formed became known as the DeKalb-Sycamore Electric Co.

Many are the stories yet untold of the old DeKalb-Sycamore streetcar line. Many yet alive can recall the Fourth of July when the boys placed dynamite caps on the rails. When the cars rolled over the caps, it sounded like a real war-time battle had broken out. In addition to the terrific noise, the exploding caps often caused the car to jump a bit. Blue streaks of fire flew as the caps exploded, and clouds of dust were blown about the area. Passengers were jolted, and some of the more timid ones were really frightened.

At the opposite extreme, in the fall when it had rained, the kids would scatter water-soaked leaves on the rails. The old car would roll into the slithery mess and stop moving forward. The motors would roar, and the motorman would cuss the kids. Finally, it would often prove necessary for the motorman to get off and clean the rails if he wished the car to be on time at the other end of the line.

On at least one occasion it wasn't kids, but a cow that delayed the car schedule. Stanley "Pete" Tastad, who later became fire chief in DeKalb, was motorman that night. In telling of the incident afterward, he said that no one was hurt, but some passengers were made mildly ill by the huge stink. While the carcass was being removed all passengers hurried to an area where the wind carried the aroma to other climes.

Another stunt of the kids which drove both passengers and the motorman "wacky" was yanking the trolley rod off the cable. That of course, shut off the power and stopped the car. The motorman then had to alight and manipulate the trolley rod back into place.

Riding the car itself was fun. Once in a while the motorman opened the door between his area in front and the smoker's section just behind. He'd reach around and grab some dozing college student just above the knee and sink his fingers into the lad's leg with a vice-like grasp, bringing a howl of pain from the boy and creating general laughter throughout the car.

Romantic Stops

Many a romance was sparked on the old car, not so much by amperes as by staying aboard the car as it made its long dash out and around what was then known as Northern Illinois Normal

School. Couples had a few seconds of billing and cooing while the motorman was out swinging the trolley rod around to the rear so as to start the return trip. While the rod was off the cable, there was no power and the car was darker than the inside of a goat. Many a heated kiss was stolen from supposedly unsuspecting gals on these trips.

DeKalb boys dated Sycamore girls, and vice versa. Several gray-haired Sycamore papas today can recall dating DeKalb girls and staying so long that they'd miss the last car home and be forced to walk all the way to Sycamore.

We have neglected to mention all this time how faithful the old car was. It ran a daily schedule, including Sundays and holidays, a car every half hour from 6:00 A.M. to midnight.

Snow was one of the worst problems that faced the old car. But this was no disgrace, for railroads, trucks and autos had the same problem. Records do not tend to indicate that there may have been a little more snow trouble in those days than we have now.

Lawyers Solve Problems

There was the day when circuit court was due to go into session and Attorney A. G. Kennedy (later Judge Kennedy) had an important case on the docket for trial. During the afternoon and night before, a snowstorm blocked highways and, of course, the streetcar line. Court was in Sycamore, and Kennedy lived in DeKalb.

Kennedy learned that, while passenger trains were not attempting to operate between DeKalb and Sycamore, the Chicago North Western freight trains were running. So he took some weighty tomes of law with him and placed them on the freight scales along with himself. Then he had the freight agent make out a bill of lading covering several hundred pounds of law books and journeyed to Sycamore via freight train aboard the caboose. Classing his body as "law books" did the trick.

One time, when E. I. Boies, editor and owner of the Sycamore True Republican and his friend, Attorney John Faissler, both of Sycamore, were attending a lodge meeting in DeKalb, they missed the midnight streetcar. Mr. Faissler, who was one of the most brilliant lawyers ever to hold membership in the DeKalb County Bar Association, was the attorney for the

DeKalb-Sycamore Power Company. Boies, of course, had the power of the press behind him.

They proceeded to call the power company manager and get him out of bed, informing him that they wished to get home. They directed him to call a motorman who would get out a street car, that they might thus get a ride home. This was done forthwith. It is probable that this may have been the only instance of its kind in the 27-year operation of the old streetcar. That special run was made about 2:30 in the morning!

Saves Children

At least one act of heroism is found in the records touching on the streetcar line. On a Sunday afternoon, April 25, 1917, Ralph Tastad, brother of Stanley who later became a motorman, was riding the car. At that time, the Henry Sandholm family resided on the north side of DeKalb Avenue in Sycamore, just a few feet west of where the car line turned west off Center Cross Street. Their four year old daughter, Alvina Sandholm, was in the family's horse-drawn buggy in front of their home. Other children were with her but their names are not in the record.

When the car rumbled and creaked around the corner, the horse became frightened and ran away. Tastad jumped from the car just in time to grab the reins of the frantic horse. He was dragged some distance and badly bruised, but he halted the runaway and thus saved the children from possible injury. In those days, horse and buggy accidents were as common as auto accidents today.

In Sycamore, the car tracks started at Main Street and ran west on State to Center Cross, turning off State and following Center Cross to DeKalb Avenue, and then on out to DeKalb. The streetcar did not follow the same route as the present four lane highway but carried on due west to what was then known as Electric Park Corners, there turning south to DeKalb.

Part way out of both DeKalb and Sycamore there were short curved switch tracks. These were necessary because the two cars were running constantly in order to keep up the half hour schedule. The two cars would meet at these places, and one would switch to let the other pass.

In hot weather the car line took off its winter clothing, and summer cars appeared with open sides - no doors or win-

dows. During Sycamore's greater chatauqua years, several of these summer style cars were placed in service to accomodate the many down town and east side people who would have otherwise had to walk all the way out to the chatauqua grounds. The grounds were the old Marsh Park where the new west school is now located. The summer cars ran every fifteen minutes during the rush hours before and after the afternoon and evening programs.

Andy Betty

The waiting room for the car line at the Sycamore end was located at the extreme west side of what is now the Lee Hagen Ace Hardware store. It was a narrow store space with regular wall thickness partitioning it from the larger section of the first floor of the former Townsend building.

For some years Andrew "Andy" Betty was in charge of the waiting room, where he conducted a candy shop and newsstand. He also provided seating for those waiting for the car. Andy was an interesting character. Tall and talkative, he was congenial and always gave his candy to the kids. Politics, sports and gambling were his chief topics of conversation. Yet, because he loved to talk with people, he might launch into a discussion about most anything.

Highly Respected - Gus Kirchner

At DeKalb the waiting room was in Gus Kirchner's drug store where Lehan's drug store and restaurant is located today. The DeKalb man was just as congenial as Andy and enjoyed conversation as much if not more, but he was not a gambler and was interested in sports only to the extent of wanting to know how college and high school athletic events came out on a Saturday afternoon; and of course, he kept in step with the major league baseball standings. For the most part, though, he was a splendid citizen and family man, highly respected and loved by all who knew him.

Incidentally, referring back to the Sycamore waiting room, it is recalled that before 1914, for a number of years, the post office was located in the larger section of that Townsend building, in other words, next door, east of the streetcar waiting room.

Light and Power

Today practically all Sycamore industry buys its power from the Public Service Company, known in Chicagoland as the Commonwealth Edison Company. For years, that power was bought from the DeKalb-Sycamore Electric Company which later became the Northern Illinois Light and Power Co.

Mention of industry and power is made because there was a time when most Sycamore industries created their own power with huge stacks of coal, big boilers and stationary steam powered engines that turned giant generators to create the required machine shop power,

For as many years as there has been power generated by the electric companies in Sycamore, the city water has been pumped by means of electric power.

Many more Sycamore people than is generally realized can remember when gas lights served homes, stores, and even our streets. For in their day, and before the advent of electric lights, gas lights were much better than whale oil or kerosene lights. However, the coming of electric lights brightened Sycamore as nothing else ever had.

Show windows of stores in downtown Sycamore were very dim before 1900. Some windows had no lights at all and had to depend entirely on a big oil lamp hanging inside. City streets were dark and gloomy and were dreadful for nervous people who had to walk through in the night. Electric arc lamps at intersections were as magic to the citizens.

So, in closing this story of light and power, again we will remark that Sycamore owes the late John B. Whalen a great debt of gratitude for pioneering in electric light and power in a day when to do so seemed a great risk of his life's cash savings.

Born In The East

A brief note concerning the life of J. B. Whalen is a must at this point, and it will be noted that he was responsible for several other marks of progress in Sycamore. Born in Penfield, N. Y., on August 5, 1850, he arrived in Braidwood, Ill. in 1870. In 1872 he became a clerk in J. H. Rogers store in Sycamore, and in 1873 he became deputy circuit clerk under DeKalb County Circuit Clerk E. F. Dutton.

In 1876 he set up the first abstract office, which he continued to head until 1890. In April of 1876 he married Nellie Farndon, an adopted daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James S. Waterman. (The Watermans were among Sycamore's more prominent families of that day.)

While he was busy living the events mentioned above, he managed to find time and the energy to secure the first telephone service for Sycamore, to secure for Sycamore its first electric light and fire alarm system (first in the county), and to serve as an alderman from 1879 to 1883. He also headed Sycamore's Athenaeum Association that in later years was almost entirely responsible for the acquisition of our public library.

In 1890, after 22 busy years during which he did so much for this town, he and his wife moved to Spokane, Washington. He died there in 1933.

Electric Park

Due to the influence of the DeKalb-Sycamore Electric Co., Electric Park was established. It was located on land owned by the late Henry Groves a short distance west of the old car line and the old concrete highway right of way and about 2 miles west of Sycamore.

For many years the park was the scene of gala events such as Fourth of July and Labor Day celebrations, big picnics and baseball games.

The first golf course in DeKalb County's history, a four-hole course, was laid out there. There are people still living in that area who can recall, as boys, having hung around the first tee in hopes of obtaining a caddy job. As near as can be determined, not one of the golf enthusiasts of that day is yet alive.

For a time, Henry Groves managed the park and rented the park ball diamond and grandstand for Sycamore and DeKalb baseball games. He did not wish to show any partiality to either team, as he was doing business with both. So - he would journey to Sycamore just before a game and place a \$5.00 bet on the Sycamore team. Then he would go to DeKalb and place a similar bet on the DeKalb team. During both transactions he would talk heavily in favor of the team he was betting on at the moment. In that way he always felt he was being fair and honest to both of them.

The dance pavilion at the park burned twice. In the later years, when automobiles became more and more popular and took people further and further away to bigger parks and events, Electric Park activities faded away. They died permanently after the new four lane highway changed the right of way. But the area holds many pleasant memories for those who enjoy the happy hallway of our Memory Lane.

More Car Line Tales

In the memory of many who continue to live along the route of the old streetcar, especially those in the Electric Park area, the activities of Claude Lakers, DeKalb car barn chief, bring smiles even at this late day. He often took the speediest of the cars out after a snow storm of blizzard proportions had stacked most of the "white rain" all over the car tracks. He wasn't the least afraid to use the car's power to smash the drifts or to scare the shovelers.

On several occasions crews of men were hired to clear the rails with old-time hand shovels. The shovelers were each given an area and soon dug themselves into an open place surrounded with uncleared drifts. A howling wind from the opposite direction prevented the crewmen from hearing the oncoming car. Lakers would wink at passengers on the car and, quietly moving the car closer, would open the throttle to full speed, haul down on the mighty whistle, and roar up so suddenly and so close to the unsuspecting shovelers that they found it necessary to hurry in all directions to avoid what seemed like certain disaster.

Actually, Lakers had the car under control. He was laughing and having fun on an otherwise cold winter day. Meanwhile the crewmen were applying verbal fireworks and some blistering description on the mind and body of one Lakers.

The power company used to stack its coal reserve in the rural areas along the right of way. Coal cars were used on the old car line to transport this reserve, and motormen, including Lakers, had themselves a hilarious time. After emptying the cars at one side of the right of way where switch lines were installed, the crews would let the "empties" roll without caution and be delighted when they collided with cars moving from the opposite direction. The impact would be so great that the two cars would buckle; their frontends would rear up to form a peak and then slam back to the rails. Sometimes they would escape damage, but on other occasions they might be bounced off the

rails, or some part of the car might crack or break.

C'est l'Amour

Obviously, names cannot be revealed even at this distant day, but something akin to a furor in car line social circles erupted like a bellowing volcano when one of the car line bosses who had been called out on a repair job, and had taken a special car to carry out his mission, came upon a regularly scheduled car stopped out by the Kishwaukee Country Club. At that time there was a small waiting room building about the size of "ye olde time two-holer privy" out there. It was intended to be used in inclement weather by golfers who did not have automobiles.

On this particular occasion the aforesaid boss discovered one of his regular motormen engaged in a steam heated romance with "la faire femme" inside the waiting room. The boss not only hauled the unlucky motorman over the coals, but let the news out in such manner that it got back to his wife.

Boy and man, what a rucus ensued several months later when this same motorman (he'd been put back on the job on probation) discovered the same boss romancing in the same spot! This particular scene wasn't geared to the same high temperature as his own had been, but what he came onto was tender and sweet until he showed up! No one got fired! ! !

Tricky Oilcan

An oiler of the carbarn crew boarded a car headed for Sycamore one afternoon, armed with one of those long spouted oil cans such as engineers used on the old steam engines of railroad fame. Riding the car was a passenger, a gentleman by the name of Bill Reid, who was noted for his quick temper. Someone dared the oiler to scare Reid into thinking he (the oiler) was

going to squirt oil over Reid. Reid warned him he hadn't better do anything of the sort. But the oil can did spurt forth a tiny stream - just enough to dirty one of Reid's ears. Dynamite never exploded quicker. The oiler failed to show up for work for several days, and he wasn't suffering from a cold. A few white patches and scars about the face told the story.

MISSILES DEFEATED BY SECRET WEAPON IN ELECTRIC PARK WAR

There was a two-battle war between the Bike Riders Battalion of the Electric Park Kid's Corps and Sycamore's Cyclist Raiders of the County Army back in the early 1900's. The war ended in a draw. The two units became allies for fun thereafter, but the two major engagements of the fracas were unique to say the least.

It was in that era of Sycamore and Electric Park history when the highway between the two places was paved with nature's good old dirt. Automobiles were few and far between and it was several years before concrete paving united the two spots.

Grove's Hill, just south of Electric Park, had fairly steep and rather high embankments. Often the Sycamore Raiders planned an expeditionary force bound for DeKalb. As part of the trip they used that south road with its high banks as a sort of race track at the curve.

One Sided Victory

The Park Battalion became weary of seeing those Sycamore upstarts using what they figured was their private track. One morning the Battalion from the Park area became entranced with what they deemed a brilliant idea. They acquired a considerable layout of guided missile ammunition in the form of nice, soft and squashy tomatoes; some very elderly eggs of great interior strength and a considerable supply of the most rotten apples they could find.

The Battalion took up positions as skirmishers behind the high banks at the curve, and along the hill, in such a manner as to form a perfect ambush. When the Raiders from Sycamore were close enough to show the "whites of their eyes" the Park Battalion "commander" gave the order to fire and the county seat lads received an awfully nasty pasting. It was so bad that the Sycamore kids admitted defeat and turned around. They sped back to Sycamore at top speed for baths and clean clothing, while the Park lads celebrated their one-sided and very complete victory.

Before describing the "Secret Weapon" attack staged in retaliation, a bit more of geography is required. One of the most important assets of Electric Park was always the baseball

diamond. This nicely levelled area created a dandy spot to play race track with bikes, and for some reason known only to the vast minds of small boys, the Sycamore Raiders had chosen Sunday mornings as a favorite time to play race track on this diamond.

Sycamore Up Early

The Sunday following the one-sided victory by the Park Battalion started out as a great day. The Park outfit thought it odd that no Sycamore Raiders were to be seen heading for the park that Sunday, but it was logical to assume that the enemy was afraid of more rotten eggs and tomatoes. So the Park Battalion on their bikes headed for the ball diamond which they figured they would have all to themselves.

They hadn't recognized that two factors were important and dangerous characteristics of their "defeated" enemy. One was that Sycamore boys will get up before dawn to perform duties. The second was the factor of young minds with ideas. As the Park Battalion cycled into the park, one after another suffered sudden and very flat tires. Most of their bikes had flats before it dawned on them that the Raiders had arisen as the gray light was feathering the dawn; had sewn the road leading to the diamond with hundreds of tacks, and lay in waiting to observe the results of their secret weapon attack.

Later the Sycamore Raiders appeared on the scene and enjoyed a hearty last laugh. Peace was then declared and both units joined forces to sweep up the tacks. From that day on they became the closest allies.

FAMED WHODUNIT AT ELECTRIC PARK CREATES BIG SCARE

The biggest uproar to grow out of mere fun in the Sycamore area occurred around the old Electric Park during Sheriff Henry Decker's regime at a time when Al Butzow, better known as "Dutch", was chief deputy. It might be called "The Mystery of the Disappearing Tire."

It all started when a story got around that there had been a robbery over at Genoa. It was never learned among the young fellows at Electric Park whether there had actually been a robbery, but they used it for impetus to give birth to what they all thought was a brilliant scheme.

Dusk Changes To Darkness

They acquired an old tire and tied a rope to it. At dusk that autumn evening they tossed the tire out along the highway. The first car to come along was that of Wayne Storey, now retired and living in DeKalb. Trouble was, he stopped his car on the rope that held the tire and almost spoiled the stunt. Much to the happiness of the boys he drove away without offering any threats. He stopped at Charley Adees farm southwest of Electric Park corners. Many other cars stopped and people got out to pick up the tire, but each time the boys yanked it back out of sight.

The boys changed their position on the highway and again tossed out the tire. Along came Mrs. William Gilbert of Sycamore. She saw the tire and made a move to leave her car. In the meantime one of the boys had obtained a shotgun and he fired it into the air. Mrs. Gilbert gave out with an unearthly scream and jumped back into her car, temporarily in a state of shock.

I've Been Shot!

She hurried to the Adees farm and, all out of breath, tried in an excited manner to tell Storey and Mr. Adees, "My God, I've been shot, I've been shot. Help me!" The two men calmed her fears and finally made her understand that she was not wounded at all. Then she tried to tell them that her rear tire must be full of bullet holes. The men, trying hard not to laugh, again soothed her worries, but at her insistence, called the sheriff.

The boys, meanwhile, decided to change their location once

again. From their new position they again tossed out the tire. This time Roy Winchester, now living in California, but then a resident of Sycamore, was the victim. He drove on a distance, left his mother in the car, and walked back to pick up the tire.

He looked everywhere and finally asked the boys where the tire might be. The boys solemnly told him that there never had been a tire around there. About that time Mrs. Winchester called out, "Roy, what on earth are you doing back there so long? I'm afraid. It's dark out here."

Answered Roy, in that high pitched voice that many readers will recall, "Why, Mother, I can't find that darn tire anywhere."

By that time Sheriff Decker and Deputy Butzow had arrived at the Adee farm. The boys had parked their car, belonging to George Groves, at the Adee place. The officers, of course, took the license plate numbers and put the case down as an attempted robbery so as to pacify the frightened Mrs. Gilbert.

Throng Lines Highway

While all this was going on the news had spread in both Sycamore and DeKalb. People came in crowds, parked along the highway and speculated. All sorts of wild rumors flew. A story later appeared in the papers that reported the "shooting" as an attempted robbery.

Several of the boys had occasion to come into Sycamore a few days later and Chief Deputy Butzow spotted them and let them know that the law had solved the case and that no more such shenanigans would be tolerated.

To this day the boys involved talk it over and get a laugh out of what was their greatest and funniest escape.

BEAUTIFUL PARK IS VALUED
AT NEARLY THREE QUARTER MILLION

Sycamore's Community Park continues to be one of its greatest assets. This is true not only from the standpoint of its financial value, but also because of its beauty and the wonderful recreation facilities it offers. Today, park officials admit they have never determined the exact value of the park because it will never be sold, but they hazard a rough guess of more than three quarters of a million dollars as a fair sale value.

Today the park is made up of 113 acres of land, approximately 2,000 trees, an eighteen hole golf course with pipe line drainage system, a swimming pool that originally cost \$35,000 but would cost at least \$70,000 now, a beautiful superintendent's home, a substantial inventory of tools and machines, machine sheds, concession house, tennis courts, baseball diamonds and picnic grounds. The park is enjoying its 36th year as this book is written.

Original Cost \$25,000

The Sycamore Chamber of Commerce can be credited with making the park a reality, but of course hundreds of citizens and many organizations have helped to beautify and equip it. It was the board of directors of the Chamber that accepted the responsibility and leadership in the project that began back in 1923.

Deciding that \$25,000 would be needed as a minimum fund for the purchase of land and equipment for the proposed park, Ira A. Wetzel, then president of the Chamber, announced to the press in 1923 that the campaign to provide the growing city of Sycamore with a park, was under way. A petition seeking an election that would approve a park district bond issue was the first step. On November 27, 1923, the people voted 812 to 688 for the park and the bond issue. It is recalled that it took several elections before enough voters were accumulated to give the project a majority.

The park started with a picnic ground and nine hole golf course, laid out on 56.7 acres of land. At the end of the first year the park posted the following statement to show how the bond issue had been spent: for 56.7 acres of land, \$14,460.25; for construction of tennis court, \$163.95; for construction of drives and walks, \$584.60; for layout of golf course, \$616.20;

for purchase of trees, \$66; for planting trees, \$351.63 and for digging and equipping a well, \$367.00.

Emil Cassier, park superintendent for the past 32 years, reported in July, 1959, that one good green for the golf course would cost (as a contract job) \$5,000. He said, also, that many of the beautiful trees in the park would cost as much as \$200 each today. He points out, too, that to merely blacktop a tennis court in these days of inflated currency would cost over \$2,000.

Water Level Drops

Many things have been donated to the park down through the years. One of these gifts has now disappeared. The Sycamore Woman's Club donated a drinking fountain, complete with a rock wall and cement steps. Located at the southern end of what used to be the old lagoon, this spring fed fountain offered healthful, refreshing water to its visitors for many years. Due to the lowered water level of the artesian well table under the earth's surface in this area, the spring has dried up and it has become necessary to discontinue its use.

William McAllister, Great Benefactor

William McAllister, one of the strongest supporters of the park, built and donated a cottage as a memorial to his deceased wife. It was erected on the island between the Kishwaukee river and the old lagoon, and has served as the residence for the park superintendent. Occasionally very heavy rains have caused the Kishwaukee to overflow its banks completely isolating and even at times flooding portions of the house. About three years ago the cottage was moved to the extreme west side of the park on higher ground, and the island has been converted to additional picnic area, reserved for the use of Sycamore residents only.

Again, in 1928, McAllister displayed his love for the park by purchasing and donating to it another 36.8 acres of land. At the same time the trustees of Waterman Hall (now McLaren Center) gave the park a deed to 2.5 additional acres. With this additional land, plus 10 acres acquired by the park board in 1938, another nine holes were added to the golf course and the picnic area and baseball diamonds were expanded.

Honor Vernon Wetzel

By popular donation the attractive drinking fountain which

is located near the swimming pool, has recently been added as a memorial to Mr. Vernon Wetzels. He dearly loved the park, was president of the board of trustees for many years, and it is a sad and sacred memory to the fact that he died of a heart attack on the golf course.

Two large boulders honor two men who lived almost a century apart, both of whom helped to make it all possible. One stone, near the west entrance honors Carlos Latin, first cabin resident of Sycamore; and the other, located at the base of the flag pole, honors William McAllister. The steel flag pole was donated by Fred Waterman in 1926.

In 1935 the Park Board, aided by WPA funds, authorized the present swimming pool at a cost of \$35,000. It was dedicated during a three day celebration of July 4, 1936. During its first 28 days over 10,000 people, young and old, enjoyed the blue waters of the pool. On one day 508 tickets were sold. By the time school reopened that fall and the pool was officially closed for the season, over 15,000 people had enjoyed its use.

It is recalled that A. W. Sawyer made a gift of several beautiful maple trees as memorials to the deceased heroes of World War I. The Sycamore American Legion Post 99 also bought trees and had them planted as living memorials for the war dead, and the Sons of Veterans of 1938 likewise provided living memorials in honor of heroes of the Civil War.

Full credit must be given to those wonderfully civic minded men who made up the officers and board of directors of Sycamore's Chamber of Commerce in 1923. That courageous group made a dream come true. Today thousands of people, not only from Sycamore, but from many cities of the midwest, including Chicago, are happily enjoying the fruits of that dream.

Heading the group was Ira A. Wetzels, president of the Chamber; Arthur H. Holcomb, vice-president; M. F. Carlson, secretary; and Bert P. Stroberg, treasurer. On the board were J. C. Joslyn, telephone executive; G. E. Dutton, banker; Warren Hubbard, County Superintendent of Schools, A. E. Hammer-schmidt, banker; A. B. Gochenour, president of the Chicago Insulated Wire Company; Harold V. Engh, another executive of the wire industry, now president of Turner Corporation; and T. J. Ronin, real estate owner and financier.

The first park caretaker was a Mr. Woods of suburban

Chicago. He was succeeded by S. M. Henderson, who later acquired the title of park superintendent. Then came the present Superintendent Emil Cassier, who has remained on the job for almost 32 years. Under his supervision, the park and its golf course have been built into one of the finest in the nation for a community the size of Sycamore. Because of the outstanding job he has done, Emil is considered an authority on the building of greens by the District Greenskeeper's Association.

Prior to the construction of the modern swimming pool in 1935, the old mud and sand bottom lagoon served the bathers. It is recalled that Orville Clutterham, for the past fifteen years a member of the Los Angeles police department, was one of the first life guards. Herbert "Hub" Hampson, now operating a nursery and floral shop on the east edge of the city, is believed to have been the next guard.

Along in those early years Hampson, Clutterham, Leonard Bollinger and Randolph Langlois formed a swimming team. The team won a few trophies and then entered a ten mile swim event in the Mississippi River. As they report today, they broke no national records on that long swim but recall they had a lot of fun.

Another poignant memory is that of the four Underwood boys serving as caddies on the golf course. Miles, Jay, Glenn and Bob were kept well supplied with vitamins by their mother who brought pies, cakes and sandwiches all the way to the park for them. Two of the boys, Jay and Glenn, gave their lives in service during World War II. Their grand little Mom is gone now too.

Par For His Course

On the more humorous side it is recalled that "Luke" Mc Lagan tried to become an "old pro" and teach a couple of Sycamore gals how to play golf, nearly losing his noggin in the process.

He had as students one balmy evening, Electa Carlson (now Mrs. Jess Shrout), and Evelyn Peterson (now Mrs. Herbert H. Hampson.) The girls cannot recall today which one was guilty, but they do remember that "Luke" had just discussed stance with one of them and demonstrated how to hold the "stick". (The gals just couldn't call them clubs.) The would-be instructor noticed that the tee had tipped over and he reached down to straighten it.

One of the gals had taken a tremendous bite of the atmosphere and bore down with a fast swish. The club, a driver of course, caught "Luke" just above the eye and knocked him colder than an iceberg off the Newfoundland Sandbanks.

He says that when he came out of the coma and opened his eyes the two gals were leaning over him, both whiter than the best face powder on the market. They thought they had killed the poor guy. "Luke" immediately gave up his intentions of becoming a "pro" instructor, and the girls quit golf for at least a couple of days.

That summer also saw the end of "Luke's" golfing career. After losing \$11.00 worth of golf balls in the sugar beet patch along the east fairway, he sold his "sticks" and has never played since.

Jessen Shocks Pa

About the time "Luke" gave up golf, his buddy L. A. Jessen, now living in Chicago, decided to throw discretion to the winds and try the game. One afternoon he bought a bag and some clubs and entered his home on South Cross Street. His father, resting from his day's labors as a painter, looked up over his bifocals and almost lost the pipe from his mouth when he saw his son coming in with that new fangled golf outfit. His feet crashed to the floor and he half stood up and rumbled, "My God, Les, has it come to this?" He didn't recover from the shock for days.

Bothersome Bovine

Although thousands of people enjoy the park annually it was rather surprising that very little of a humorous nature was uncovered in connection with the big recreation area.

Superintendent Emil Cassier revealed a quite laughable situation that developed one Fourth of July. He did not recall the exact year, but he did remember that it rained all day July 3rd that year. A golf tournament had been scheduled for the big holiday.

As dawn arrived, the Cassier's arose in anticipation of a gala and busy day. As Emil stepped to the door to go afield for his day's duties he was astounded to look into the face of a cow gazing in through the window of the door - a peeping Belinda.

The park chief stepped outside and waved the calm bovine away and began an inspection of the golf course to determine whether the rain of the day before had done harm enough to prevent the golf tourney. He was more than a little peeved to look over at number 9 green and view SEVEN COWS enjoying the wonders of the park. They looked a bit annoyed as the grass on the green was too short for their breakfast.

They prevented the tournament from being played as they had messed up a \$5,000 green so badly that it required some time to repair the damage. The cattle had strayed over to the park during the night, from pastures across the highway to the north.

Finds Ma And Nine Brats

Mr. Cassier remembered another incident of interest that, while not hilarious, is worth a wide smile. It was in the fall of the year and the park chief was preparing for the long quiet winter ahead. There is a pump house in connection with the shelter house and he had occasion to enter the place, as there was some slack lime stored there that he needed.

As he entered he noticed a vast array of animal tracks on the walls and noted, too, that they were white. The animal or animals had tracked through the lime and then over the walls. In the pump house, under a large curved pipe he noticed some stray pieces of straw. As he started pulling at the straw he was astonished to discover a large female possum and her nine youngsters. He tried hauling her out by the tail but that didn't work, but he later obtained help and the family was moved out and established in a new home under the nearby bridge.

Snakes Quit Golf

In recent years Emil states that he has seldom seen any snakes in the park, but in the days when the park was young he found many of them. Often he found large balls of small garden size reptiles all wound up among themselves. No rattlers or dangerous snakes have ever been found in the park. He added that in all the 30 odd years he and his family have resided in the park, no rodents have ever gained entrance to their home.

He doesn't recall who they were, but he said it was true that occasionally someone plopped into the river while attempting to retrieve his golf ball.

POLICE CHIEF HAS NAP RUINED BY WILD HUSBAND

Many days and nights passed in Sycamore back in the early 1900's with very little excitement. Months might come and go during which the weather or the arrival of a sixteen pound boy would be the only major topics of conversation. Then suddenly many things would happen at once.

On a raw night in 1909, Chief of Police Barley Stroberg was aroused from a comfortable cat nap, sleeping with his feet on the desk and his cap over his eyes. He was wanted because an estranged husband was "raisin' " all tarnation at his former home on the southeast side of town.

The chief slipped his "Billy" club into its hanger on his belt, buttoned up his coat to face the autumn wind, and trudged out. Arriving at the home he found the husband in a vile mood and under the influence of the well known chemical called "Old Crow." The officer made the arrest and started to the calaboose. No squad car in those days, so both had to hoof it.

Hubby Cries Fire

Nearing the police station the wayward husband began to squirm and complain that his house was on fire. The chief, thinking that liquor had really given the man the heebie jeebies, rapped him over the head with the club and told him to shut up. But the man was so sure that something was wrong that the chief finally sent a boy running to the home to find out if there really was a fire.

Sure enough, the youngster came back on the run, yelling "Fire! Fire!" The chief locked up the prisoner and ran to the power plant a half block east of the old police station where the fire alarm system was located. The engineer on duty determined the ward in which the fire was located, and hauled down hard on the lanyard to sound the old steam fire whistle. For the next few minutes the community was driven nearly crazy by the most horrible mixture of shrieks, growls and wails ever to be heard before or since. Something had broken inside the whistle. The only thing it did was to arouse the entire population so that they all were running hither, thither and yon asking, "What is it? Are we all going to die?"

Realizing that the fire whistle wasn't going to be much help

that night, the police chief scurried over to State Street in the hope that help might be found. Sure enough, Joe Ogden was loading some stage scenery and other equipment for a troupe of show people that were preparing to leave the old Ward Opera House. Ogden was the operator of a horse drawn dray in those days, and later served as a police officer.

Chief Stroberg convinced Joe that there was a fire and that his team was needed to drag the hose cart to the scene. And so, the fire was finally halted, but not until its head start had permitted it to do quite some damage.

A case of arson was suspected because everyone surmised that the estranged husband had set the fire. They reasoned, "How did he know the house was on fire after he started to the jail?" However, no evidence was dug up to prove it, and the case ended up as a disorderly conduct affair.

Chief Resumes Naps

The fire whistle was promptly repaired, the chief could resume his evening naps, and once again all was placid in old Sycamore.

POTAWATOMI STEW WAS WONDERFUL
FOR AN 1835 LUNCHEON



If 1960 parents ever wish to cure their youngsters of the aspiration to become Indians, all they need is some of the many ingredients of an Indian meal. Kids would probably be ill, as well as cured of Indian lore, if they were made to eat what the Potawatomies enjoyed in 1835.

Old settlers told of watching Indians of the Sycamore, Coltonville and Kingston areas make maple syrup. After they got the syrup into a nice stew, using the backs of turtles for pans or wooden pots hewn from trees, they would drop in such delicacies as woodchucks, an occasional skunk, foxes, muskrats, etc. As soon as the mess was well cooked they devoured it with very evident joy and relish. UGH!

In 1836 the state capitol was located at Vandalia. It is fascinating to recall the way of life even for a prominent politician 124 years ago. It was in 1836 that Henry Madden, of what is now known as Brush Point, was elected a state representative. (Brush Point is on the Kishwaukee river, northwest of Sycamore.)

It was 250 miles to Vandalia, much of it over prairie land. Roads as we know them were not in existence, and many of those 250 miles of trail wound through forests of genuine virgin wilderness; beautiful, but dangerous and packed with hardship.

State Representative Madden made the entire trip on horse back. It is doubtful that a politician of 1960 could survive the rigors of such a trip - - even if he were elected governor.

MEMBER OF ELLWOOD FAMILY LOOKS BACK

In the following paragraphs appears a brief story about the home and people of the Ellwood family. That family was one of the most prominent and highly respected in Sycamore from the early 1880's. The story came in a letter from the last member of that family, Mrs. Eleanor Ellwood Singer, who left the old Ellwood home on Somonauk Street about two years ago to live with one of her daughters. Mrs. Singer died at Christmas time in 1959.

Eleanor Ellwood Singer, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Abram Ellwood, was born August 7, 1883, in Sycamore in the house now occupied and owned by the former Bessie Maitland. Mr. Ellwood later sold this home and bought property on Somonauk Street, the lot extending from the corner of Somonauk and Ottawa Streets south to the property now owned by John Schneider.

The Ellwood lot was beautifully landscaped. One of its nicest features was a wonderful apple orchard on what is now the Mrs. J. W. Ovitz property. In the center of the present Louis Boumgarden property, located between Ovitz and Ellwoods, was a grand pine tree. On the edge of this lot were several small evergreen trees. The drive came in from Somonauk and circled around to the back of the lot to the stables, located where the big garage stands on the Boumgarden property.

Pony, Cow and Horses

Mrs. Singer recalled that in those days of carriages and horses, the family also kept a riding pony and a cow. The cow was cared for by a Charlie Johnson and taken daily to pasture in the big vacant lot owned by the late Chauncey Ellwood. This lot is now the Esther Mae Nesbitt property at the northwest corner of Somonauk and Chauncey streets.

Mr. Abram Ellwood, a manufacturer of farm implements, was mayor of Sycamore for eight years. He died in the Battle Creek Sanitarium after a long illness of Bright's Disease at the age of 47. Mrs. Abram Ellwood, one of the most active members of the Congregational Church, died in the Somonauk Street home at the age of 94.

One of the family's most enjoyable memories was their annual New Years Day family dinner served by caterers from

Chicago. The annual event was held in the home of the Chauncey Ellwoods.

Mrs. Singer, at the time of her death, made her home with her daughter, Elise Singer Scott, in Arcola, Illinois. Elise is the chemistry teacher in Arthur, Illinois. Mrs. Singer's son, Leonard and family recently moved from Sycamore to Pomona, California. Her other daughter, Lorraine Singer Jamison lives in Burbank, California.

Quiet Under The Elms

Other members of this respected family already gone are: Leonard Ellwood, son of Mr. and Mrs. Abram Ellwood, who died in Kansas City; Mildred Ellwood Blake, wife of Charles G. Blake, prominent designer and monument builder, who died in Florida in 1951; and Sally Ellwood Stevens, who died in a hospital in San Diego about two or three years ago.

FIRST C&NW RAIL CARS WERE TWO-HORSE POWER WITH HARNESS

Within a span of 100 years Sycamore has experienced the interesting phase of the coming of the railroads, has seen them at the peak of their operations, and then has watched them as they began to lose the gigantic economic battle with the automobile, truck and airplane. Today, in 1960, there are no longer any passenger trains operating on any railroads in and out of Sycamore, but freight is still carried by both the Chicago Great Western and the Chicago and Northwestern Railroads. One wonders how long this will last.

Railroading got off to a strange start as far as Sycamore was concerned, in 1859. A group of Sycamore's economically courageous investors of that day sank \$75,000 into the project of laying a rail line between Sycamore and Cortland, so as to connect with the main line of the Chicago & North Western. Because no engines were available at that time, it was used as a two-horse power line.

It was necessary to haul the freight on flat cars drawn by these two horses. Old-timers tell of one particularly rough winter during which deep snows fell and the surface became ice coated. This necessitated the hauling of lighter things such as mail and some light weight freight across country by bob sled. These trips were made through fields and over fences without regard to the rail lines, trails or highways.

In later years the C&NW laid rails to Belvidere at which point they connected with the line to Rockford. For a considerable period there was excellent passenger and freight service over that route. Today all of that is gone. The rails have been removed, and Sycamore's only link with the C&NW is over the old branch line to DeKalb.

One of the oldest landmarks in Sycamore is the C&NW station. It isn't kept in the same attractive condition as it was in the early 1900's when passenger and freight service were at their peak. Today there are many who would like to see it replaced.

First CGW Train Order

The present Chicago Great Western Railway had its start with a charter issued on March 4, 1854, to the Minnesota and

Northwestern Railroad. However, the M&N did nothing with the charter for 30 years. When they finally began operations, they built in the St. Paul area first. On August 1, 1887, their first through train ran from Chicago to St. Paul. It was in 1892 that the road officially became the Chicago Great Western Railway.

The Sycamore area, however, was involved with railway activity long before 1887. In fact visitors of today, who call at the new station in Sycamore, can view on the wall in the office there, the first train order ever issued in this sector. It is on view as an historical memo.

That first train order read as follows:

MINNESOTA & NORTHWESTERN RR.

Train Order No. 1

May 5, 1857

Morrison, Eng. 2 will meet McManis and Flint & Engs. 16 & 28 at Compton Pit.

R.C.H.

Rec'd. by O.T. Willard 3:49 P.M.

That train order meant that work trains operating west of Sycamore were scheduled to meet a train headed east, and that the trains were to meet at Compton Pit, one mile east of Lily Lake. The R.C.H. signature stood for R. C. Hudin, superintendent.

Open DeKalb Branch, 1895

The DeKalb and Great Western Railway Company was incorporated on March 23, 1895. It built a branch line which was used for many years for hauling freight between DeKalb and Sycamore. The first train over the branch was run on September 1, 1895. In 1947 the line was abandoned and the rails have since been torn up.

Passenger service over the main line of the CGW was suspended on August 12, 1956. A new, modern freight station was erected in 1951 to replace the old, antiquated combination freight and passenger depot. The old depot was purchased by Lyle Bleifuss, moved to his lot a mile north of town on Route 23, and remodeled into an attractive residence.

Some Sidelights

Readers who never had occasion to travel westward on the CGW, might be interested to know that the line passes through a tunnel a half mile long at Winston, Illinois, about 100 miles northwest of Sycamore.

Originally the CGW had intended to go to Freeport, but ran into an argument with the Illinois Central, who wished to have exclusive rail service to that city. Because the I.C. had the only railroad bridge over the Mississippi, and the CGW wished to use this bridge on their proposed route to St. Paul, it was finally agreed that for the use of the bridge, the CGW would relocate their tracks so as not to include Freeport.

Girl Rides Handcar

Mrs. L. A. Vaughan, the former Gladys Koehn, whose father was the CGW agent for a number of years at Sycamore, recalls what is believed to be the only instance of its kind in this community. As a child of grade school age, she remembers as one of the major events of her life, a thrilling trip she took on an old-fashioned hand car.

For the reader in this modern age, a hand car was a four wheeled rail vehicle operated by manpower. It had two cross bars that were connected to the wheels by means of gears, and when the bars were pushed up and down, the car was propelled along the rails. Primarily, such cars were used by the section crews in their maintenance work along the right of way.

Mr. Koehn, on this particular occasion, borrowed one of the little cars, and along with two other men, whose identity she fails to remember, pumped the car over the rails to DeKalb so that Gladys could attend the circus that day! She is quite possibly the only Sycamore girl that ever rode a hand car to a circus.

It is also remembered that many young people from Lindenwood, Clare, Five Points, and other nearby areas west of town, used the regular CGW passenger trains to attend school here. Automobiles were very uncommon then, and wagons or buggies drawn by old dobbin were too slow, so the teenagers boarded the old CGW milk train at 7:30 each school day morning, and rode the same train homeward at 5:30 that night.

Romantic Excursions

The CGW passenger service provided a mighty popular way to have fun in the old days. Many people rode into Chicago early in the evening, and boarded the famous "Midnight" for the return trip. Attractive excursion rates made week-end trips to the theater or to major league ball games a pleasant event for a large part of the citizenry.

Occasionally there were excursions of longer mileage, to St. Paul, Dubuque, etc. Years ago, an exceptionally large group of Sycamore youths made a week-end trip to St. Paul. On the return trip late that Sunday night, the conductor entered the car, turned on the lights, took one horrified look, turned off the lights and retreated. He had forgotten to take the tickets earlier, and the impressive skill with which massed romancing was being enjoyed by the young people, was too much for the old boy.

Railroad men tell of some very humorous events of years past on the old CGW. They do not recall exact dates, but the events occurred either in the late 1920's or early 1930's.

The Coffin Mystery

The first concerns a faithful and hard working negro, Burman Winfrey, who worked the night shift around the old depot. One of Winfrey's jobs was to take care of the baggage as it came from the old "Midnight" passenger train.

On this particular night, C. V. Kebil, Sycamore mortician who has since retired and moved to California, had a corpse being shipped out from Chicago. He removed the casket from its plain wooden protective box, placed it in the hearse, and headed for his mortuary.

Meanwhile, a couple of the railroad workers decided to have some fun with Winfrey. One of them climbed into the rough box, and the other one attached the cover.

When "Winnie" finally got around to straightening things in the baggage room of the depot, he heard a low moaning sound coming from the vicinity of the box. He moved a bit nearer and listened closely. Again there was an agonizing moan, followed by the sound of a "corpse" turning over in the box. This was too much! He let out a screech, went out the door with such speed that he loosened the hinges, and didn't stop running until he had

arrived at his home. In all probability his family was as scared as he was as he related the wild story that a corpse had either come to life, or its soul was moving around in the coffin box.

From that day forward, Winfrey refused to have anything to do with any boxes containing coffins.

The Dogorama

And there was the time "Bunny" Utter had trouble with the dogs. The railmen say that a pack of dogs, for some strange reason, took a notion to gather for several days in the vicinity of the coal chute where Utter was employed. He got mighty tired of their yapping and, even though he tried everything from firecrackers to clubs, the dogs remained.

Then one morning the entire north side of Sycamore was startled by a terrific yowling, barking and baying. Windows went up, housewives dashed to back porches, and even the old switch engine running a couple of cars on the tracks came to a halt as eleven dogs came running through the yards. With a female leading and 10 males in pursuit, the parade sounded as if the world was coming to an end.

It was several hours before the full story was known. Mr. Utter had emptied one of those long-spouted engineer's oil cans, filled it with kerosene, and watching his chance, had fired at the female. She headed off at top speed with her many "boy friends" on her heels, and that was the last anyone saw of those same dogs the rest of the summer.

Guess He Liked Her

Now and then something humorous happened to passengers on the old CGW trains.

One summer morning, when the White Horse Army church was conducting its annual convention on Sycamore's north side, an incident such as this took place. It was the custom for one of the conventioners to meet each train, greet the arriving delegates, and escort them to the church. On this particular occasion, a visiting pastor was selected to be the official greeter when the westbound morning passenger steamed in about ten o'clock.

The first delegate off the train was an attractive, very

intelligent looking woman, well dressed, and looking quite capable of taking care of herself. The reverend greeter was real smitten with her profound good looks. He stepped up, took her in his arms, and romantically kissed her.

She promptly drew herself up into a haughty pose, and, using both hands, gave the reverend a sharp push, saying at the same time, "Ah don' believe ah knows you!" For a moment the greeter was subdued, but when he explained he was a high and official person of the ministry, all was well. He forgot to greet all the others, but they just followed the rapturous couple and no doubt found the church without any trouble.

Hire and Fire Parade

Back in 1936 the twin blizzard that tied up everything else in the Sycamore area, tangled things up for the Great Western, too. For several days nothing moved. A switch engine became stuck just west of the depot which in turn caused two east bound trains to become stuck. The engineer on one of the east bound freights was a Pat Hyland from Chicago.

Heads of the CGW had ordered the Sycamore rail officials to hire a crew to dig out the engines. When the crew arrived at Hyland's engine he directed them to shovel the snow into the engine's water tank. The engineers had been keeping the steam up so that the boilers wouldn't freeze. Hyland figured that the snow would replace the rapidly diminishing water supply, but the emergency crewmen refused to go along with his idea. In his aggressive way, plus some extra harsh language, he fired the entire gang; in fact he kept firing them as more arrived.

It was several hours before the Sycamore CGW officials discovered that they were paying a taxi to haul more and more men to shovel snow, only to have Hyland fire them as fast as they arrived. Until the situation was cleared up, the railroad piled up quite a taxi bill.

In the end all three engines froze up at a heavy loss to the railroad. It couldn't be avoided - there wasn't enough water and the temperature dropped to 25 degress below zero.

MASONS AND I.O.O.F
BUILD THREE STORY LODGE HALL
IN 1889

The Alida Young Temple, across from the court house, has the distinction of being the oldest lodge hall building in the city. It was built by, and has been the home of, the Masonic and Odd Fellow organizations for the past 70 years.

Impressive ceremonies marked the laying of the corner stone and dedication which took place on July 22, 1889. W. J. McAlpine was the architect and builder. The building cost was \$15,000, a tremendous sum for that day.

GENOA-SYCAMORE CAR LINE
AN EXCITING ENTERPRISE 1910-19

A most interesting, but short lived, business enterprise of the early 1900's was the Woodstock-Sycamore Itnraurban rail system. It had strong backing and its managers had great visions of success, but the coming of the automobile, plus the fact that no really large cities lay along the right-of-way, brought about eventual failure. This commercial adventure had the dubious distinction of being the first of the rail lines to succumb to the new age of privately owned transportation.

A corporation of Chicago origin, with the aid of numerous stockholders from Sycamore, Woodstock, Marengo and elsewhere, financed the road. A Mr. C. G. Lumely of Chicago was president. Such prominent Sycamore people as Freederick B. Townsend, then president of the Pierce Trust & Savings Bank , D. A. Syme, then president of the Sycamore National Bank, and Circuit Judge C. D. Carnes, were financially interested in the road.

Several old time Sycamore residents are identified in the photo below showing the crowd of people present when the first spike was driven for this car line. The mustached man in the long coat with the maul over his left shoulder is Mayor Frederick Townsend; Dr. Charles Brown is the man with the engineer type cap and in front of him with one hand on the rail is Attorney Joseph Stevens; George Little, father of Senator Merritt Little, is the one with the velvet collared coat looking over Townsend's right shoulder; the two boys in the foreground are Frederick and Elmer Boynton.



It was on May 4, 1910 that Mr. Townsend, in the presence of some 500 or 600 fascinated spectators, drove the first spike. He actually swung the maul that drove the big spike, although, several miles of the new rails had already been lain when this little ceremony took place.

Excellent Car

On July 30th, that same year, the first excursion open to the general public drew an overflow load for the first car ride from Sycamore to Genoa. The car was built to accomodate 75 passengers, but 85 jammed it for that first trip.



Taken in the early 1900's, the picture above shows car number 711 of the old Sycamore-Genoa car line. The car deserves special mention; it would do justice to these modern 1960 days. In fact, it was far better than many used on the major cross-country railroads today. It was a 30 ton, bright red, boat shaped car, that would be classed as a streamliner now. It was a combined parlor and baggage car. The round port hole windows added to its distinctiveness and the two, huge four-wheel trucks gave it an impressive steamboat look.

In this picture the car was standing in Sycamore near the turntable used to turn the car around so that its motor and driving power were always headed toward its destination, Genoa. Left to right in the picture are: the conductor, Ray Walters of Rockford; engineer, Guy Hartzell of Chicago, a brother-in-law

of Mrs. Charles Koehn of Sycamore; and motorman, Harry Cole of Genoa. The man standing in front of the car could not be identified.

During its first year it enjoyed some degree of success. It made the eight mile run in fifteen minutes and received much praise for its service. After a court battle to get its right-of-way extended, the line was built all the way to Marengo. Among its problems was the construction of a viaduct under the right-of-way of a steam railroad serving Genoa.

From then on it began to have financial troubles. There were not enough passengers to enable the road to pay its operating costs. First hint of what was coming was in the form of a reduced number of runs between Sycamore and Genoa. The road finally quit, and in later years the rails were torn up. Its right-of-way never did get as far as Woodstock, as had been originally planned.

Tragedy And Deviltry

Three events stand out in the memories of those who recall the old car line. One was tragic and the other two involved young people in a typical kids escapade.

A Sycamore man by the name of Jorgenson was a motor-man for a while on the Sycamore- Genoa run. Passengers, who had boarded the train for its 6:20 A.M. run to Sycamore, became quite impatient one morning when Jorgenson failed to return to the car from the car barn. After a time, an investigation was made, and Jorgenson was found in the barn, dead. He had stumbled and fallen in such a way that he suffered a fracture of the neck.

Thirty "Peck's Bad Boys"

Sycamore men in their 40's and 50's of today recall the summer day when they landed in the local calaboose as a result of using the Genoa-Sycamore car for a target the evening before.

They were just kids - about 25 or 30 of them - who had been enjoying the swimming hole located near the white bridge over the Kishwaukee on the north side of town. One of the little "stinkers" came up with the idea of throwing clay or mud balls at the car as it passed.

It was their bad luck that windows were open and several ladies in white summer dresses were passengers. The women, spattered with mud, were small bundles of fury by the time they found the police. They all talked at once, but Chief Joe Ogden got the idea. He began a summer round-up, and by nightfall of the next day, had corralled practically all of the youngsters. He kept some of them in jail until late that evening; others were paddled by their papas right there in the station, or out on the street; and the rest of them were hauled home where punishment could be applied more efficiently.

The city kids were not the only ones involved with deviltry along the old railroad; farm boys also had their share of fun. It is recalled that some of the boys who lived near the Wood family home north of Sycamore, located one of the line's flat cars on a siding, pushed it on to the main line, and dared Nellie Wood to ride it down the steep grade at that point of the tracks.

No sooner said than done; and she maintained right up to the time of her death that the flat car ride provided her with one of the happiest and most hilarious events of her life. After it was all over, the boys obtained a team of horses to pull the car back up the grade to its proper place on the siding.

Prospectus of 1898

It is interesting to note that John B. Whalen, who did so much to bring electric power to Sycamore, and about whom a separate story appears earlier in this book, was among the first to join those men whose visions led them to plan an electric line running from Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, south to Morris, Illinois. If that plan had succeeded, the line would have been the longest electric railroad in the world at that time.

Mrs. Ella S. Townsend, 820 Esther Avenue, Sycamore, has in her possession the 84 page prospectus of the proposed "Geneva Lake, Sycamore and Southern Electric Railway Co." The company was incorporated on January 13, 1898, and the prospectus was published and distributed to all cities along the proposed route. It has many fascinating pictures of historical interest to the old timers of those communities.

Actually, however, the road was not electrical in every respect. There was no trolley wire or third rail. A gasoline engine powered the generators that provided the moving power for the big car. Also, the road never reached as far as had

been originally planned. In fact it even failed to live up to the name that its backers later adopted, that is, "The Woodstock-Sycamore Intraurban." Sycamore was its southern terminal and Marengo was as far as it ever reached to the north.

Emil Cassier, superintendent of the Sycamore Community Park, recalls having seen the car at its Marengo terminal. As a boy he often visited in the home of his aunt and uncle, and he remembers that his uncle's horse was terrified at the sight of it. Even if it were standing and no motor running, the horse would rear high up on his hind legs and paw the air in great fear of that big, red monster.

The line ended its short and interesting career in 1918. It began with a schedule of cars every fifteen minutes, but ended with runs of only one or two a day. Stockholders were sad and disgusted when the end came. It was often said, after it was all over, that firm started without enough capital, and even less credit. Most investors suffered a total loss.

OLD HIGH SCHOOL ESCAPADES OUTDO TEENAGERS OF PRESENT

In recent years we haven't heard of any Sycamore school episodes to match some of those of the days of yore. Vandalism, tricks and wisecracks on the part of both students and faculty abound in the memory of many old grads here.

A group of students of the old high school, which was located at the southeast corner of the intersection of California and West Sycamore streets, performed a major task of depredation one night along about 1917 that should live in local annals as a supreme effort. The job required tools, energy, and one entire night of hard work.

The "commandos" entered by prying open a window on the north side of the building. They then proceeded to remove all books from student's desks in the study hall, and transport them downward three floors to the boiler room. After that they used screw drivers to loosen numerous desks and turned them completely around and screwed them down again.

Umbright, Principal

The same night this crew of pranksters removed a mesh grating from one of the wall ventilators (they were flush with the floor) and carefully placed a live hen inside. On the desk of the SHS Principal, A. G. Umbright, in the assembly room, they placed three eggs with a sign that read, "Laid by yon hen during the night."

Classes were delayed the next morning while the students retrieved their books from the boiler room and the janitor reset the desks.

Then, later in the morning, when all was quiet during a study period, came the climax. "Luke" McLagan remembers that he was studying algebra and was seated directly behind Mr. Field Morris, now a resident of Waterman. The calm was broken by a joyful cackle from "yon hen." The bird had gone unnoticed up to then, but being an industrious creature, she had proceeded to do her duty. She laid an egg and wanted to tell the whole world!

The resulting turmoil of laughter ruined the study hour and made the principal so mad he almost came down with a rash.

Needless to say, the first guffaws came from Field and "Luke."

Later that winter the high school building on East State street was opened and it was here that Mr. Umbright, while conducting a class in commercial geography, gave forth with a famous and humorous bit of wisdom. He said that he had read in the morning paper that scientists had predicted the sun was good for only about 20 million years longer. Added Mr. Umbright, "Some people I know will read this and then go out and order another ton of coal right away."

Laughing Biology

Oh yes, before we leave that old high school building we must report the famous morning biological exhibit that drew lots of laughter and a crowd of neighbors before it was discovered.

The biology department boasted of a genuine human skeleton in its laboratory. One morning a dawn patrol of lively youth noted that the late Superintendent, O. E. Peterson, would be delayed in a lower floor conversation long enough to permit their action. They swiftly obtained the skeleton, draped it with Mr. Peterson's suit coat and hat, rushed it out through his office window and gloriously raised it to the top of the flag pole!

Even "Pete", as he was affectionately dubbed by his students behind his back, had a smile when he wandered outside to inquire as to the reason for the large crowd of smiling students and adults gathered to the point of blocking traffic.

Halts Classes

Another humorous episode, culled from the memory archives of students of the old high school, brings back the day of "who, how and why" of the bell ringer. One of the boys, who was skilled in electricity, was designated as the school electrician. Among other things, he was supposed to keep the warning bell in efficient operation.

By a double-pronged prank, another lad who also knew his volts and amperes, "doctored" the bell so that it rang for a general assembly when none was scheduled. Classes were suddenly ended; students and teachers poured forth into the assembly hall, and the entire school became a beautifully disorganized chaos because no teacher or school official could be found who knew

anything about who, how, or why an assembly had been called. More and more confusion resulted when an attempt was made to resume classes. Finally school was dismissed until noon.

Crash! - Mystery Solved

While doing some of that aforementioned electrical work one afternoon, some boys discovered some class play stage sets in the attic of the old high school. Their brilliant young minds promptly gave birth to the noble idea of creating a club room right there in the attic.

For weeks after that the faculty posted guards at wash room doors, doors leading outside and all other places where they thought students might be hiding. Seems that the students would be reported inside the building but would suddenly disappear.

The mystery was solved swiftly one afternoon shortly after school was dismissed. One of the lads slipped away to the secret attic rendezvous. Being alone, and it being rather warm up there, he dozed off. About a quarter to five that afternoon, when the winter sun was low in the western horizon, darkness set in on the attic just outside the "club" area.

A bit sleepy when he awoke, the lad tried to get across the attic, but in so doing slipped. "Luke" McLagan and Sylvester Mann were in the assembly hall below and were supposedly suffering some punishment study, having been canned from one of their classes during the day. They were startled when a crunch and then a loud crash sounded overhead and plaster started to fall on them.

A glance upward disclosed two legs dangling through the ceiling. One shin was bloody, one garter (yes girls, the boys wore them in those days) was hanging loose, and there was heard some strange mutterings from above. With the aid of McLagan, Mann and Supt. Peterson the scared boy was extricated, but his troubles didn't end there. He was suspended for two weeks and warned that if he failed in his grades after he returned he would lose all credits for that semester. He made it, but he didn't have anymore "fun" the rest of the year.

It Would Be Him

"Luke" now confesses that it was he who set the alarm

clock at the "proper" hour and also placed the Tom cat inside the piano shortly before a fancy musical program was to be held in the assembly hall one morning.

Faculty members didn't mind the alarm clock as much as they did the terrific fright some of the lady teachers suffered on the stage when the piano top was lifted to remove the clock. The cat zoomed out into supersonic orbit with a yowl that was heard by a neighbor across the street.

Undoubtedly there are many more such amusing tales to be told concerning the old high school. Perhaps, after reading this book, present day parents or grandparents will recall one or two humorous incidents in which they were involved which will be worth repeating to their offspring. We hope so.

SYCAMORE-DEKALB RIVALRY IS NOW HALF A CENTURY OLD

Arthur (Art) Quinn, retired veterinarian of Sycamore, remembers much of local history - probably more than most of the people in the community today. Sports have always been his chief interest, but horseback riding was a major activity with him in his younger days. He has been a resident here for over half a century.

As a youth he journeyed to Guthrie, Oklahoma, to visit relatives. He made the trip out by railroad, but he and a friend decided to return by horseback. They began their long ride on April 28, 1902, and arrived back in Sycamore on June 10th, a ride of about six weeks.

What many people today do not know is that Art was also an amateur poet. Proof of this rests in the poem presented at the close of this story. The poem is a satire growing out of the all-time high rivalry between DeKalb and Sycamore concerning the site of the court house.

Struggle For Court House

In its earlier days Sycamore was larger than DeKalb, but even in those days there was a fight as to where the court house should be located. The first fight Sycamore experienced was with residents in and about the village of Coltonville. They had wanted the county seat to remain where it was at that time, Coltonville.

Sycamore, however, won that battle and the first court house was built on the south side of State street about where Art Taylor's Garage, Hudson's D-X Station and the Sycamore Auto Parts store are now located.

But that did not end the fight - several times later DeKalb attempted by means of political maneuvering to take away the court house. It was during a time when such political activity, if successful, would have moved the proposed new court house to DeKalb, that Mr. Quinn wrote the poem, "Local Political Satire."

DeKalb Won The College

At the time of the campaign to win the state normal school

(now Northern Illinois University), a committee, made up of legislators, educators and others, was scheduled to inspect DeKalb as a site for the school. It is said that one of DeKalb's residents arose a few hours before dawn the day of the committee's expected tour, and swiftly constructed a temporary dam across the Kishwaukee so as to bring the water level up to a new summer high near the proposed college site. He hoped to impress the visiting delegation with the river's beauty. Perhaps the stunt was a success - at any rate DeKalb won the college.

Basketball Fist Fights

The DeKalb-Sycamore rivalry never has completely disappeared. Witness the jam in the gym at any basketball game between the two teams. The fans seem to be more bitter than the teams. Years ago in the old DTHS gym, Sycamore took a beating in which the Sycohi team made only one point. DeKalb won mainly on free throws. Fans made war on the charge that the officiating was unfair. Immediately after the game there were a number of fist fights in the school halls and outside. The police had to be called; arrests were made, and the next day fines were paid.

The writer recalls that night vividly. He and James Organ, now superintendent of the Anaconda plant at Marion, Indiana, crawled on their hands and knees through the halls to the doorway while fists were flying above them. Heaving a sigh of relief as they stepped outside, they were startled to run into a terrific scrap near the main door. Around the corner they ran into another one. Many of those scraps were between adults, too.

There was a time in history when it was even worse. On a winter's night many years ago, a group of DeKalb boys and girls went forth on a bobsled ride. They rampaged around Sycamore for a while. The Sycamore youths became fed up with the entire commotion and, as the DeKalb crowd were scrambling back into the straw-lined bobsled, someone set fire to the straw. A runaway resulted. No one was seriously injured but many were bruised and slightly burned. The police arrived too late. All was quiet and the sled was gone when they appeared.

Romantic Rivalry, Too

Trading vandalism was a feature of those days. Daubing school steps with yellow paint, stealing goal posts off football fields, and similar stunts were common events that caused a

lot of conversation, more threats and counter threats but nothing of a serious nature ever developed.

Even in romance there was sharp rivalry between the two cities. Sycamore boys fought over DeKalb girls and the DeKalb boys fought over the Sycamore girls.

But, it all started with the fight over which town was to have the court house.

* * * * *

Local Political Satire

When they move the court house to DeKalb
They will build as of ancient times
So I have been told.
The floors will be of silver, and
The walls will be of gold, when
They move the court house to DeKalb.
North Avenue will be a boulevard, and
Somonauk a lane when they move
The court house to DeKalb.

Uncle Reuben Holcomb will be
Marshall of the Day and Brother
Art will be milking Jerseys up in
Heaven so they say, when they
Move the court house to DeKalb.
The Dye Works will quit dying
And King Partridge will quit lying
When they move the court house over to DeKalb.

They will build as of ancient times
So we've been told, the floors will be
Of silver and the walls will be of gold
When they move the court house
Over to DeKalb.

- Arthur Quinn

Pictured below is the original high school building which was completely destroyed by fire on February 21, 1926. Firemen received the call at 4:15 in the morning and found the place an inferno when they arrived. It was evident that the blaze had been in progress for some time before it was discovered, but the cause of the fire was never discovered.



The building was built in 1899 and served as a high school until 1917 when the high school on East State Street was opened for classes for the first time. From February, 1917, until the time of the fire, February, 1926, it was used as the Central Grade School.

It was in this building that most of the high school stunts related earlier in this book were committed. For instance, it was on the flag pole you see in this picture that the boys hung the skeleton that happy September morning in 1916.

On page 110 you see the original frame building that was used as the Central Grade School up until the year of 1917. Built in 1863, this big three story structure was the largest and most elaborate grade school in DeKalb County at that time.

By 1917, when the grade school students were moved over to the old high school building, it had served its purpose and was torn down.

In the cupola above the third floor was the old school bell. The writer can recall that he often made Miss Hopkins, his fifth grade teacher, madder than a wet hen by tolling or banging that

historic old bell. Once in a great while he was allowed the supreme honor of ringing it at the noon hour.



The third floor held what was known as The Gothic Hall. Interesting events held there were musical programs and local talent dramatic entertainment. In later years, however, either the Opera House down town or the high school assembly hall next door was used for these special events because of their more adequate seating space.

* * * * *

Sycamore can well be proud of the fact that down through the years its school system has kept pace with our ever increasing population. In September of this year our new high school opened its doors to the largest enrollment ever. Grade school children from kindergarten through the sixth grade are very well situated in Central, West or Southeast elementary schools, the latter two modern buildings having been completed only 7 years ago. The former high school has been converted to a junior high and adequately handles the boys and girls of seventh and eighth grades.

Where is la' femme of yesteryear -
With her frills and furbelows gay;
Her shy little smile - her savoir-faire,
Living life in her old-fashioned way?

You ask of la' femme of yesteryear -
You would never know her now;
Her limbs are encased in toreador pants -
Her hair plastered down on her brow.

She wears her Dad's shirts - her brother's old socks,
Her shoes are a sight to behold;
She adores Rock and Roll - and her language is queer -
She's noisy - she's sassy and bold!

She's not turning out as her Pa and I planned
When she was a cute little baby,
But she'll probably marry - have kids of her own;
And live happily afterward - (MAYBE).

Edith Driscoll
Sycamore, Ill.
June 17, 1959

FIRST CITY WATER SYSTEM
COMES HERE OVER OBJECTIONS
TO EXPENSE AND TOWER



The tower above is the most prominent feature of Sycamore's first city water system. It was erected in 1888 over vehement objections of many citizens. The objectors argued that it wasn't necessary and also that the town's beauty would be ruined by the proposed unsightly tower. Some felt that 135 foot high tower would be a menace to life and property. They argued, too, that their home wells were serving quite satisfactorily and it was, therefore, unnecessary to spend all that money. Finally it was brought to a vote, the proposal carried, and the tower was built at the intersection of State and Main Streets.

Among the hundreds of fascinating photos that appeared during Sycamore's wonderful centennial observance in 1958, was one taken shortly before the water tower was dismantled in 1904.

The silo-shaped tower was constructed of thick steel plate. The writer remembers that he was so afraid of that thing in the winter that he would go many blocks out of his way to avoid being near it. The tank overflowed almost every day and water seeped in between the plates and froze. Quite often the expansion and contraction caused a plate to break with a resounding crash that jarred a little more water out the top. "Luke" feared that one day the entire tank would collapse and drown everyone in town.

His First Movie

"Luke" recalls that his late father, William McLagan, was taking him to see his first movie in Sycamore history one bitter cold winter night in 1904. Just as the two were leaving their home, one of the steel plates banged off causing "Luke" to let loose with a wail of fear. Rather than take the direct route up State Street, he insisted that they make the trip via Page Street and California Street.

By the time they reached the "Opera House", over what is now the Sycamore Shoe Store and Stiles for Styles, they were half frozen and wished then they'd never started out. The heat from the two stoves finally thawed them out and they enjoyed the movie, "Hiawatha". The vaudeville that evening, staged midway through the movie, was a comedy taken from the famous newspaper comic strip of the times, "Happy Hooligan."

"Luke" says now that in spite of that awful water tank, those were great days for him.

SANE HOLIDAYS ARE GOOD
BUT NOT AS EXCITING
AS IN 1910 AND 1912

Sycamore enjoyed some exciting events years ago. Fourth of July celebrations were held here that were colorful with flags, fireworks, parades and other fun. It was in 1910 that the big day proved to be more stirring than anyone alive can recall before that year or since.

It started about 4:00 A.M. when a group of patriotic lads jammed some black gun powder in the barrel of one of the Civil War cannon that once stood at each side of the monument in the courtyard. They packed the open end of the cannon with wet clay, ran a fuse outside and lighted it. The resulting detonation awakened everyone between here and Genoa, brought out the entire police department (all 2 of 'em), cracked the plate glass window in Frank Johnson's furniture store (located where the far east section of Hagen's Ace Hardware is now), and brought out the fire department.

In those days the power company had a branch steam plant in Sycamore located in the alley behind what is now the Newman building. The steam fire whistle howled its mournful call to summon the firemen, but there being no fire they could only cuss the miscreants who had gotten them out of bed so early for nothing.

Big Parade

The big parade was next. Marching in it were: the entire city council and mayor, entire volunteer fire department, Modern Woodmen of America, Masonic Lodge, horse drawn floats on hayracks, etc. For that era it was a real fine parade. Of course there was a carnival strung out all along State Street and kids were firing three, four and even six inch firecrackers all day long. Dogs went into complete hibernation.

The city authorities had voted to permit the fireworks display to be fired eastward, down the then dirt road of State Street. The firing was done at the intersection of State and Main Streets. The only trouble was that somehow or other the big sky rockets, roman candles and similar things had a bad habit of veering off to the right or left. The firing ramp was built over the Boynton fountain, but the missiles of that day were not very well guided.

The result was that the fire department set an all time record for answering calls in one period of a few hours. No real serious fires resulted, but there were a number of roof blazes, several barns were damaged (no garages then), and a number of lawns were singed by fire as the weather had been very hot and dry. So ended the long day for the fire department - 4:00 A.M. to midnight.

No fireworks were ever fired from that spot again much to the disappointment of Sycamore kids.

July 4, 1912

Fourth of July night, 1912 was a holiday more of fear than fun for some people. Consider, for example, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Crosby and their small daughter, Mabel. Also Mr. and Mrs. George Walrod. The Crosby and Walrod livery stable stood on the spot where Taylor's Garage of 1960 stands. The Crosbys lived around the corner on Main Street where the John Carlson family has resided for years.

For that particular Independence Day celebration, a carnival had been set up along down town State Street. A night parade was held and boxes of blazing red fire were throwing a great glare over it all - a local Dante's inferno. At the same time individuals, mostly kids, were letting go with fireworks from the court yard. Families, that did not care to mix with the excessive hilarity down town, were celebrating with fireworks in their own front yards.

Spend Night On Barn

It became evident that a real danger of fire existed. Thus Crosby and Walrod spent most of that night on top of their big stable, watering down the roof when stray skyrockets, roman candles, firecrackers and small bombs dropped on the place. Fortunately no major fire occurred.

Mrs. Crosby and Mrs. Walrod spent the early part of the evening down town but soon had enough of it. They started for home, leading Mabel, a small child then. The trio was terrified because they found it necessary to step over, around and away from many drunks. Some were wobbling on their feet, but many were sprawled over the sidewalk.

At home they placed the little girl on the couch rather than

in bed as they feared that the house might catch on fire or that drunks might crash the doors. The women remained dressed and wide awake the entire night, ready to flee if necessary.

It was generally agreed that they never wanted to witness such a celebration again. The fact is celebrations were a bit tame from then on.

To Electric Park

For many years afterward such celebrations were held out at Electric Park, about a mile west of Sycamore. A baseball diamond with bleachers and a grandstand and a dance pavilion were built out there. Drunks were promptly removed from the grounds, and fireworks were safely fired. Much of the program was made up of band concerts, dances, ball games, races and stunts for the kids, plus picnic dinners. Of course, firecrackers of all sizes banged away all day.

A Tragedy

Balloon ascensions were an exciting novelty in those days. On one holiday at old Electric Park such a stunt proved tragic. Balloonists usually left their lighter-than-air craft via a parachute trapeze. The balloonists did trapeze stunts on the way up, pulled a release cord on the balloon so it would begin losing air, and at the same time released their parachute for the trip back down. Incidentally, it required several hours work to fill the big bag with gas before it was ready for the take off.

On this particular day the parachute failed to open. Hundreds of spectators were horrified as they watched the chutist frantically shaking the guide ropes in an effort to get it to open. Dr. John Nesbitt was the first to arrive at the man's side, but a crowd soon gathered. Even though he was still conscious, he had so many broken bones it was apparent that death was certain. All efforts to save his life failed and he died a few hours later.

That was the only tragedy of its kind in Sycamore annals, although there were the usual number of minor mishaps to mar the otherwise festive celebrations. Several runaway horses were common every Fourth of July because of the firecrackers. Also, many injuries resulted from careless handling of, or from faulty "crackers".

Last Big Fourth

Sycamore's last major Fourth of July celebration was held in 1936. In many respects it was one of the best. It was held at the Sycamore Community Park except for the huge parade which was sent through the city on State Street, east to the park.

The parade was notable for the several beautiful floats, an entire battalion of anti-aircraft artillery from Fort Sheridan, and the large number of autos entered by employees of several industries.

An interesting feature of the anti-aircraft outfit was that it was motorized and, as part of its equipment, included a mobile kitchen. Mess for the soldiers was being cooked in their truck kitchen as the unit passed through on parade. At the park the unit's guns were set up as if ready to fire at an enemy plane. It being before World War II, the show proved quite interesting to the thousands of people gathered there.

Outdoor Wedding

A most interesting event was sponsored by the then active and busy Wetzel Brother's Jewelry Store. As part of the celebration, a Genoa couple was married on a platform erected on the park's grounds.

Miss Belva Cornell and Mr. David Bennett were made husband and wife with Reverend Charles H. Draper of the Sycamore Methodist Church as the officiating clergyman. The Belvidere High School Band, aided by the Cotton Blossom Singers, furnished appropriate music for the occasion. The ceremony drew a tremendous and cheerful crowd.

Later the couple enjoyed a wedding dinner at the Fargo Hotel and were presented with a considerable array of beautiful gifts from Sycamore business firms to mark the famed event.

Drew Huge Crowd

That night fireworks were presented along the Kishwaukee River southeast of the park. As a result all roads around the north, east and south sides of the park, and even as far away as the Cortland-Sycamore road, were jammed with cars parked on both sides of their respective right-of-ways.

Estimates of the crowd in Sycamore for the day and evening events varied considerably, but the figure offered by the 15 state highway patrol officers assigned here for the event was accepted by the newspapers as being authentic. The policemen believed that a crowd of 25,000 swirled in and out of the area during a twelve or fourteen hour period.

It required weeks of hard work to clean up and repair the damage at the park. Merchants were dissatisfied because the celebration had not been held downtown so that they could have had their stores open, and as a result of their complaints, no one has ever attempted to sponsor or encourage a Fourth of July observance in Sycamore since.

Perhaps Never Again

As this is written in 1960 it can be reported that Fourth of July in Sycamore in the past 24 years has been more like a Sunday. A vast change has come. People start vacation trips that day. Others take short holiday trips. It seems as though every one is anxious to get away from here on holidays. Boating has become very popular. There must be several hundred boats in and near Sycamore, all carried by special auto trailers, that are taken to rivers and lakes for holiday jaunts.

It does look as though it is a safe statement that Sycamore may never again experience a Fourth of July celebration such as it enjoyed in the year 1936 - - - certainly never again like those of 1910 and 1912.

Memorial Day has been an important day of observance in Sycamore for 75 years or more. The general program style remains unchanged, but there was a time when its parades seemed to attract more people or units to appear in them. Then, too, the parades are no longer led by a marshall of the day riding a horse. In the early 1900's far more people gathered along the parade route to witness it, but now, with the double and triple day holidays, people leave Sycamore to enjoy relaxation from the high pressures of making a living. They go far to lakes, woods and great state parks. But there are always enough here who remember the men under crosses who served our flag and country so that an impressive program is planned and carried out as in the past.

Beautiful Animal

Some can remember when Frederick B. Townsend, one of Sycamore's most prominent and beloved citizens, led the parade as marshall of the day, riding a beautiful white horse. Because he was a leading member of the Masonic Order, he owned an impressive looking saber which he wore with his dark Masonic uniform with its white plummed hat. The uniform, saber, plummed helmet and white horse gave the parade a stirring and inspiring leadership. Mr. Townsend was a man of distinctive appearance - a really fine looking marshall.

His horse had been imported from the Kentucky blue grass country and was named Rosina Vokes. One of the chief reasons he chose that animal in addition to its form, size and intelligence was the fact that it stepped along the street with a sort of proud and graceful pickup to its feet. She seemed to know that she was leading a parade, and was stirred by the military music.

In later years, after Mr. Townsend had ceased to ride, and in fact after his horse had become too old for parades, lively, young, prancing horses of darker hue became the vogue. The last person to ride a horse leading such a procession was the late Brigadier General W. F. Hemenway, who then ranked as a colonel commanding the 129th Infantry Regiment of the Illinois National Guard, an active unit of the 1930's. Since that time the marshall has led the parade in a brilliantly polished automobile.

A record of the Memorial Day exercises of 1915 shows Congressman Charles A. Fuller of Belvidere was speaker that

year, but no mention is made as to who served as marshall of the day. The program was held in what was then known as the Townsend Theater, later known as The Opera House.

The parade that year was made up of the following: Third Regiment Band of the Illinois Militia, Potter Post #12 of the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic, composed of veterans of the Civil War), The General E. F. Dutton Camp of Sons of Veterans, the Royal Arcanum, Sycamore Fire Department, Modern Woodmen of America, Cigar Makers Union #304, Scandinavian Brotherhood of America, Sycamore Lodge #905 of Odd Fellows, the Independent Order of Vikings, mayor and city council, Board of Education, Potter Women's Relief Corps #18, General John A. Stark Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution, President of the Day, clergymen and guests. Mention of the Modern Woodmen of America refers to an organization that has long been inactive here but at one time was an outstanding lodge in the community. Dressed in olive drab uniforms trimmed in green, they shouldered axes with polished heads that glittered in the sun.

Pause For Ceremony

When Waterman Hall School for Girls was an important part of Sycamore's list of institutions, it became the custom on Memorial Day for the procession to pause on Somonauk Street directly in front of the school. Two things were accomplished. The young students and faculty were "saluted", and the parade lines were parted, came to strict attention, and presented arms. The aging veterans of the Civil War moved through to be permitted the honor of entering Elmwood Cemetery first.

At those Memorials of the early 1900's the graves were often decorated with flowers at the time the parade moved into the cemetery. In the last few years it has been the custom to decorate the graves with flowers and flags a day or so before Memorial Day.

Very often in the days of 40 or 50 years ago, when there was no National Guard Unit stationed here, a squad of Marines in their blue dress uniforms were invited to come here to fire a salute at Mt. Carmel and Elmwood Cemeteries. The salute at Mt. Carmel, followed by "Taps", was held in the morning and the ceremonies at Elmwood occurred in the afternoon after the arrival of the parade.

SOUTH SIDE SCHOOL
HAD SOME FAMOUS
STUDENT STUNT FUN

121

Newcomers in Sycamore may note the Bishop McLaren Center in the 700 block on Somonauk Street and wonder how it came to be. Oldtimers can tell them that it was once a school for girls known as Waterman Hall. Later it became a school for boys known as St. Albans. As a Conference and Retreat Center for the Episcopal Diocese now its activities are 100 percent serious, but during its years as a school for girls and later as a school for boys, many are the humorous incidents better described as escapades. However, the schools did much good in spite of the adventures related below. In fact these humorous incidents were really a small part of the school aims and accomplishments.

Waterman Hall, a fashionable and strictly ruled, Episcopalian school for girls, opened in September, 1889. It had been built to accommodate 45 students, but 75 registered. That day was a big event. A special train was run from Chicago and carried the Bishop, his aides, students and their parents, and other dignitaries. A parade was held from the railroad station to the school. There was much ado on the campus, too.

The school had seventeen pianos and gas lights. Its tower contained 2 large bells, one weighing 600 pounds, the other one 300 pounds. The bells gonged the hours and chimed the quarter hours.

For the next 50 years the faculty was kept busy restraining dozens of flowering romances between DeKalb and Sycamore boys and the pretty students. For a time the faculty thought it had won the battle when it was given permission to open the special delivery mail boxes to the boys so often sent their student sweethearts. Some of those literary gems should have been written on asbestos paper, while others could have won poetry prizes.

Later the young men worked out a scheme of hiring little boys of the town as messengers. That system worked out fine until a late afternoon about in 1908 when a ten year old messenger boy got caught in a girl's room while waiting for the lass to answer her prince charming. The lad was hauled up before the Sycamore grade school superintendent and lectured to, after which he was turned over to papa for some home treatment on his fanny.

In still later years the Sycamore young men became more

daring. They learned to climb the waterspouts and the vines so they could hold window trysts with the gals. That also worked for a while, but one of the pipes broke down with a young fatso lover one night. The noise of the crash got him into a peck of trouble. He was "canned" from SHS for two weeks with an added promise of being expelled if anything like that occurred again.

The climax came some years later. The young heroes of the Waterman Hall romances studied hard and came up with a dandy idea. At least it worked for a while. By drawing straws they maneuvered a pal to occupy the attention of the one teacher on duty as matron for the day while the others bribed the janitor. After bribing him, the one or two lucky patrons of love would sneak up into the dorm halls, meet their gals and help them slip out of the place for a bit of moonlight and a chocolate soda. Incidentally, the part the janitor played was never discovered. He came out the winner, however.

Oh! Oh!

Real trouble came one night when a telephone call from Chicago caused the lone matron to leave the student who was keeping her busy. The call sent her to a second floor room. The two young fellows who were supposed to be the lucky ones that night were thus trapped in the hall. One escaped by slipping into his girl's own room with her. She successfully hid him, but the other boy did not have time for that. His girl ran away and left him. He panicked and opened the first door he came to which contained a girl who wasn't exactly dressed for going out. She let loose with a shriek that would have put the Sycamore fire whistle to shame. Police were summoned.

He was not only expelled but landed in police magistrate's court. The records are lost and no one remembers the legal punishment, but that incident spoiled everything. From then on, until the school closed as an institution for girls in 1918, Sycamore boys were barred from dates unless they could present unimpeachable references, had a formal introduction and "suffered" the presence of a chaperone.

Becomes Boy's School

In 1919 the school opened as St. Alban's School for Boys. That ushered in a new era, but the escapades were of different nature. Before we dismiss the girls, it must be added that the knobs were accidentally removed from the old brass beds there

one day, and many love letters were found in rolls tied in ribbons that had been hidden away from prying eyes when sweet femmes graced the hallowed halls of Waterman Hall.

Scrubbing floors became a major punishment for boys who fractured the school rules of the new St. Albans. Before a room was set aside for smoking, many a boy, who was caught puffing the "vile weed" in his room, had to scrub his room on Saturday when the other boys were free.

A favorite stunt at least once each school year, usually in the spring when the track season was opening, was to roll the 16 pound shot down a floor and stairs late in the night. It always made a terrific rumble and always awakened everyone in the dorm. Much muffled laughter under the covers ensued. For those who may not know, the shot is the weighted iron ball used in the track shot put.

All-Time Winner

The crowning event of all the many years of St. Albans and Waterman Hall included was accomplished one night about 36 years ago when the headmaster and most all of the faculty were away.

A horse and ancient wagon were part of the school campus equipment. On this night the boys gained entrance to the headmaster's home. They dismantled the wagon piece by piece, toted it all inside to the living room and put it back together again. They then brought in the horse, complete with his harness, and hitched him to the wagon.

When the headmaster and family returned they had mixed feelings of anger and laughter. Whether the janitor had the job of removing the chariot and steed or whether the boys were required to do it is an item lost in the records, but it is safe to report that no other stunt ever outclassed that one.

Happy Days Gone

Because of the depression and financial difficulties that everyone suffered, St. Albans had to close in 1938. The then Dr. Charles L. Street, now Rt. Rev. Street, suffragan bishop of the Chicago Diocese, was its last headmaster. He was extremely well liked and visits the conference center often these days. In 1947 it became the conference center for the diocese.



This picture was taken from a Waterman Hall prospectus of 1906 and was probably taken some years before it was first published. It is a view looking west from the back campus.

It is a spring scene and shows several students and their instructors. Due to the great age of the photo and the fact that most of the girls were from Chicago, identities were virtually impossible.

However, the dignified looking gentleman standing back of the bench of beauties is the school's first rector, Dr. B. F. Fleetwood. Seated to his immediate left is Miss Agnes Swineford, the daughter of the Honorable A. P. Swineford, governor of the territory of Alaska from 1885 through 1889.

That beautifully blossomed apple tree is the one featured in another story in this book.

Note the fashions of the day - ground length dresses and skirts, long blooming sleeves, high collars with not so much as a throat showing.

Note also that tennis courts were mere lawns - no cement or black tops in those days. Tennis rackets had a flat top as you can see. Although the girls played indoor basketball in uniforms that completely covered all epidermis, note that they had a practice area out on the back campus - just a plain old bushel basket hanging on a pole.

SYCOHI CAGE TEAMS
HAD SOME RUGGED TIMES
YEARS AGO

125

During the past 40 years Sycamore became a basketball town. That is, as far as the high school was concerned. This was especially true during those periods when county championships were being won, and district trophies were being added.

It is interesting to compare conditions regarding our 1960 cage teams with those of years past as we look down memory lane. Two games of the 1909-1910 season stand out as we scrutinize the story because they convey with vivid detail the vast difference in traveling and playing experiences from 1910 to 1960.

Victories In 1910, Too

SHS was starting off in great style as far as victories were concerned and the fans were happy as usual. The night of January 14, 1910 was memorable for three reasons. One was the fact that Sycohi would be playing in its new gym. Second, the game failed to get started before 9:00 P.M. and third, Sycamore teams won their third consecutive victories. Geneva High was the victim.

Because of opening the new gym on East State Street, next to the library, the band was invited to lead a parade that began at the old Ward House, corner of State and California Streets. Fans, teams and dignitaries marched to the "new gym." But the Chicago Northwestern trains from Geneva were all late and the game did not start until 9:00 P.M. In spite of the late hour and nervousness due to the long wait, Sycamore's second team won 22 to 6, and our heavies downed Geneva 25 to 17.

On January 21, Sycohi was slated to play Mt. Morris there. The teams left here at 8:20 that morning aboard a Chicago and Northwestern train bound for DeKalb and then Rochelle. From there they were to board a train on the Chicago Burlington and Quincy for the rest of the trip, but no train was available on the "Q" when they arrived.

The coach hired a bobsled to attempt the balance of the trip, but after going only nine miles out, the driver had to give up. The heavy snow made it too rough going for his horses. Rather than return to Rochelle, the players and coach walked the few miles to the town of Chana. It wasn't a long walk but the deep snow made it a tough job.

They were happy to catch a train from there to Mt. Morris in time to start the game at 10:45 that night!. It was no disgrace that Sycamore teams lost that night. They were very weary even prior to the opening whistle. The heavies lost 38 to 30.

Defeated The College

In February that season Sycamore's Heavies defeated Rockford 39 to 30 and also Northern Illinois Normal 33 to 16.

As late as 1917 playing conditions were far from ideal for Sycamore teams. The writer, "Luke", can recall going over to Genoa via bobsled for a game. He was playing on the skinny-weight squad. Wesley Anderson, now living in Wheaton, was a stellar player for the varsity. He borrowed a huge horsehide fur coat, blankets and some straw and made a cave in one corner of the sled. Even though it was a clear, bitter cold moonlight night, "Luke" and "Wes" were quite comfortable on the trip.

Wash Rooms Frozen

Sycamore's coach and teams were peeved to say the least when they found on arriving that the entire wash room and shower facilities were frozen solid. It was disappointing to come off the playing floor, sweaty and tired and have no showers. In fact it was fortunate that although there were some very bad colds, no one came down with pneumonia.

Today our teams travel in heated busses, have hot and cold showers, and are accomodated in warm dressing rooms that are well nigh palatial when compared with those of the so called "good old days" of memory lane fame.

For the benefit of the younger generation and those new comers to Sycamore, we might point out that the "new Gym" referred to in this chapter, was the remodeled center section of the old Townsend livery stable, which is now known as the Sycamore office of the DeKalb Agricultural Association. The horse stalls had been removed and bleachers were installed on the east side of the playing floor.

In November, 1909 one of the bitterest uproars ever to occur in the city's history resulted over an alleged disregard for keeping the Sabbath holy. Tempers of those who enjoyed their sleep Sunday mornings collided with tempers of those who enjoyed their religious fervor with just as great an intensity. The episode went all the way to county court. Sandwiched into the melee were some laborers.

On a Sunday morning several workmen had been instructed to haul stone from CN & W cars on a rail siding where the State Street station of the Leader Oil Co. is now located. Wagons, horses and men began to work.

Franklin Sparrow, reported to have been a former member of the Salvation Army, but then engaged in a sort of free lance evangelical crusade, heard of the work order. He made his appearance on the scene completely equipped with a drum and hymn book.

Chief Arrests Him

The "Reverend" Sparrow became deeply absorbed in pounding his drum and giving forth with hymns in a plea to the workers to cease desecrating the Sabbath.

Between the voices of the men, crashing of the stone as it was loaded into the wagons, rumbling of the moving wagons, and Reverend Sparrow's vocal efforts aided by the booming drum, the entire area was aroused from its soothing Sunday slumber.

A crowd gathered. Verbal tirades were hurled as groups took sides. Finally the chief Sycamore gendarme, Barley Stroberg, all 210 pounds of him, arrived. Upon receiving official complaint, the sincere evangelist was marched off to the jail, on South Maple Street. Incidentally, the Reverend put up such a battle that chief Stroberg had to call for help on the arrest. A few days later Sparrow was freed on bond.

Jury In Stalemate

Sparrow entered a plea of not guilty, but the police magistrate of that day adjudged him guilty. Funds were raised in his behalf and his case was appealed to county court and a jury trial was demanded.

The late F. E. Brower, then City Attorney, and the late attorney, W. C. Kellum, comprised the prosecution staff. On the other side, the late attorney C. D. Rogers, defended Sparrow.

Many witnesses were heard and much angry debate ensued. Time had moved into January, 1910. At last the jury, after long and violently heated deliberation, failed to agree. Sparrow was freed, but tempers remained hot for years over the affair. An attempt was made to have Sparrow declared insane, but that, too, failed.

Two great flashes in the sky and a near earthquake-size tremor in Sycamore were cause of much excitement on Sunday evening about 8:30 o'clock, March 9, 1911. Those who did not see the flashes thought an earthquake had actually occurred.

There were no radio or TV reports in that day so it was not until the Friday issue of the Sycamore papers that many in our town learned for the first time that the jolt was caused by two gigantic explosions in a powder plant located at Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin. The detonation was felt over a 300 mile area.

No damage was done here, but rocking chairs did spook dances. Dishes rattled and the McLagan family, residing where the post office is today, thought a drunk from one of the many down town saloons was again trying to crash into their house.

Many lost their lives and an estimated \$1,500,000 damage was done to the DuPont plant in the Wisconsin city.

REAL QUAKE RATTLED DISHES
IN SYCAMORE AREA IN 1912

Sycamore has no palm trees such as southern California, but it has had earthquake tremors similar to those of the west coast. Over a period of years, according to news reports, there were four quake tremors here.

The first on record was that of 1895. A second one occurred in June, 1901, and in 1909 a third one jarred this area.

Then, on January 6, 1912, at 10:22 in the morning, things were "all shook up" around here. Rocking chairs acted as if spooks were in 'em; dishes rattled; people thought drunks were fumbling at their doors; storekeepers and customers ran outside to see what on earth was happening.

No serious damage resulted, but it surely did create an immense amount of conversation.

WOLVES TREED A BOY
SOUTH OF SYCAMORE
ONE NIGHT IN THE 70'S

As late as 1912 wolves were occasionally a menace in the rural areas outside of Sycamore. And when wolves were mentioned in the presence of the late William Nelson McLagan, better known as "Bill", he could recall having been treed by a pack of the brutes back in the 70's.

Bill was orphaned in childhood. He was raised by the Coolidges south of Sycamore. He often told the story of the night of one of his greatest adventures. He was about ten or twelve years old at the time. That particular evening he had been asked to deliver some milk, but it isn't recalled whether it was to a neighbor or from a neighbor. That isn't important to the story anyway.

Part way between the two farms a pack of wolves circled in from a nearby woods and Bill dropped his milk pail and made his way to the nearest tree. It was in the spring of the year. The winter that year had been an extremely long one with lots of heavy snow which made it almost impossible for the wild animals to find any sort of food.

Found Cold and Hungry

It was long after midnight when his people became worried and decided the boy wasn't playing. A search was organized and he was finally located in his tree perch. The animal pack was driven off by guns and torches and Bill was rescued, uninjured but hungry as a wolf.

In the spring of 1912 a pack of wolves killed and fed on six 100 pound shoats on a farm between Sycamore and Genoa. Once again it had been a hard winter and the heavy snows up north had driven the animals south in search of food.

As late as the 1930's there were reports of a lone wolf that had devoured chickens, an occasional lamb, and once in a great while a small pig in nearby Boone County. However, it is interesting to note that wolves really do not care for pork. No one has ever explained why.

HIGH PRICES AND "SHORT" HOURS
OF 1912
SEEM MODERATE TODAY

Barbers and storekeepers in Sycamore certainly cannot describe the times prior to the year 1912 as "Good Old Days." Look what happened in 1912.

Complaining of hard times and high costs, the barbers voted in that year (48 years ago) to raise the price of shaves from ten cents to fifteen cents. They also voted to close their shops at 8:00 in the evening. They had been remaining open until 9:00 every night and also were open half a day on Sundays. They decided to close ALL day Sunday - think of it! In this year of 1960 shaves are a dollar. Shops are closed all day Thursday and Sunday. They also close at 5:30 in the evening. Haircuts are \$1.50.

It was in the same year, 1912, that merchants down town voted to do an unheard of thing and close their stores at 6:00 every evening except Saturday. They remained open until their business died out every Saturday evening.

High Prices, 1912?

Now, in 1960, merchants close all day Sunday, half a day Thursday, and close at 5:30 every evening except Fridays and Mondays. No more is Saturday night the big night down town in Sycamore.

Those high costs mentioned above will no doubt give the present day reader a wan smile. More so as we now relate that coffee was selling at 25 cents per pound at Chatfield and Campbell's grocery here in 1912. They were also selling 12 cans of peas for \$1.25, Wylde and Shaw's hardware store was selling heating stoves for \$6.00; Ericson's Clothingstore advertised a suit for \$20.00; and - oh, yes - the barbers cut your hair for a quarter.

LOCAL OPTION
AND BLIND PIGS
DIED WITH PROHIBITION'S END

133

The phrases "Local Option" and "Blind Pig" were heard for many years in Sycamore as drys and wets fought numerous battles with ballots and words. Looking back one can see much humor in some of it, but at the time there was vastly bitter feeling between the two factions. Prohibition, nationally, was still worse.

The expression "blind pig" was born as a result of local option so we had best explain "local option" first. Local option grew out of state legislation which permits, even today, any organized community to vote on the liquor issue. That is, whether its citizens wish to have taverns (they called 'em saloons years ago) inside its community limits. The question was decided by an election, the same way it is done today.

During one era Sycamore voted dry while Cortland voted wet. The result was that a saloon or two opened up on the south edge of town just over the Cortland Township line. Thus a dry Sycamore was a joke.

Vocal Riot

A laughable incident occurred in down town Sycamore one quiet summer afternoon when a decidedly intoxicated gentleman wound his way over much of the sidewalk in front of the W. M. McAllister Dry Goods Store (now Henderson's). Some wag opened the store door a bit and yelled, "Local Option!" Whereupon the drunk jerked into activity, began waving his fists, trying to come about like a small schooner in a heavy sea, all the while screaming, "Whosh that? Who shaid that? I, I, I'll kill 'im!"

Boys soon took up the cry and in no time the entire down town area was a bedlam as the drys began heckling the drunk with more and more of "Local Option, Local Option." The souse was getting a bit wild and possibly bordering on delerium tremens by that time. The noise penetrated the confines of the bastille office on south Maple Street. The chief laboriously unwound his huge frame, got his feet off the desk and headed for what sounded like a first class riot.

The drunk was collared and hauled to the station, the chief was able to resume his beauty siesta, and calm settled once more over the business district. Small white butterflies began fluttering about once more as the doldrums again caused that

comfy, drowsy feeling.

Local option descended on both Sycamore and DeKalb at various times. As a result, lovers of the exciting spirits such as "Old Haymaker", "Old Crow", and "Old Rock and Rye" began forming clubs where they maintained lockers. Said lockers, in these clubs for members only, were kept loaded with the favorite firewater of the respective member. Someone, somewhere, attached the title "Blind Pig" to such a club and the name swept the country. It soon applied to any spot where liquor was kept or sold illicitly.

On To Burlington

A popular Saturday night spot was Burlington where several saloons graced the streets of that wee village. As far back as anyone could remember this town had always voted wet. In Sycamore, autos quietly congregated in back of the court house on west Exchange Street early every Saturday evening. Men of all ages, who sought gay times in Burlington saloons, just as quietly moved in and took places in the cars. One after another they rumbled off to Burlington. It had all the appearance of a well organized activity.

Ouch!

During those eras when Sycamore was voted wet much excitement prevailed as a dozen saloons were operating down town.

Before he became Chief of Police, and before he opened his drayage business, Joe Ogden was employed as a bartender at one of them. Early one Saturday evening two drunks started a first class fist fight in the place. Joe was big, heavy and strong. He suddenly placed one hand on the bar and vaulted over as easily as a 19 year old athlete. He grabbed each drunk by the coat collar and brought their heads together with a resonant crack that made others dizzy just hearing the sound.

The warriors caved in like a pair of punctured soap bubbles. Whereupon Joe, still chewing his cigar, dragged them to the door and dropped them outside for the one man police squadron to haul off to the drier.

No More Dimes

Father Porscilla, a Catholic Priest, who at one time or

another held forth in Sycamore, Maple Park and Amboy, was a good natured, devout and huge man. He'd often give a dime to someone he knew who was down on his luck, but he did not like hard drinking or rough-housing.

On one occasion he heard a rumpus going on in a Sycamore saloon. He asked about it and learned that one of his parishoners was wild drunk and looking for a fight. The big padre's face hardened and a grim glint appeared in his eye as he stepped up and into the saloon. He moved directly over to the aggressive drunk and grabbed him. In a few short steps he smoothly lifted the inebriate off the floor and sailed him through the air out into the street. This particular parishoner never got another dime from Father Porscilla.

Disarmed

It was the accepted rule of saloon and police ethics that an officer should not enter a saloon to quell a disturbance unless summoned to do so. On one occasion when Ogden was chief, he strode into a saloon without having been asked for help. A slightly inebriated gentleman from Clare, who was 6 feet 3 and 276 pounds of farm-built brawn, was creating trouble.

Ogden bawled him out and the visiting farmer wanted to know what the gendarme was going to do about it. The chief told him to get out. There was a sharp, short mixture of wrestling and gladiatorial combat, punctuated by grunts and a few cuss words.

The chief suddenly found himself on the floor with the visitor standing over him. Without another word, the Clare man laid the officer's gun on the bar, walked out and went home.

Actually Sycamore never has been dry. It may have voted out its saloons, but liquor has always flowed here in spite of a local option, prohibition, or any other attempted legal barrier.

Prohibition was tried nationally. As a result, in Sycamore, more young people below voting age did more drinking than at any time before or since, and the worst of it was that much of the stuff was more horrible to get down than the vilest medicine ever concocted by man. All over the nation drinkers went blind, were paralyzed or died from the bootleg whiskey.

There was one night in that era of the "noble experiment",

as the national dry law was sometimes called, when the DeKalb County sheriff was notified that a man lay dead in the Chicago & Northwestern freight yard in Sycamore.

Officers hurried to the scene only to find an itinerant bum dead drunk. His abdomen was so hard that when a doctor tapped it during a jail cell examination, it sounded like tapping a snare drum. That is no humorous exaggeration.

His stomach was pumped and he was given medication by a forced tube. Several days later, when he had mentally and physically recovered, he was hauled up before a Justice of the Peace and told this remarkable story.

A Bum's Genius

He and three of his buddies had found some shoe blacking that they decided had a goodly percentage of alcohol - "alky" as they called it in those days. They pooled their pennies and bought a loaf of rye bread. By puncturing one end of the loaf, they created a sort of faucet. They poured the liquid shoe blacking into a larger opening at the other end. Then they stood the loaf on end over a tin can. Very patiently they waited as the "alky", fairly cleared of the blacking, slowly dripped into the can. They then had a "cocktail" party by drinking the alcohol, which turned out to be pure wood alcohol. The officers never did learn what happened to the other two fellow bums.

Early in the regime of President Franklin D. Roosevelt it was easy to see that prohibition was on its way out. The day of the speakeasy, the combination gambling joint, tavern and house of prostitution, was fast ending. The day of cheapened life of the gang world, along with wealthy bootleggers and beer runners, would soon be something only for story books, movies and TV scripts.

Taverns were quietly but illegally operating in back rooms in Sycamore as three percent beer became legal. This was followed by the legalizing of all forms of liquor. Since that day Sycamore has never been dry and it has been years since a local option was held here. The first Illinois Repeal occurred on the third of March, 1933.

No More Massacres

The number of tavern licenses is limited. Drunks do not

take up prone positions on the down town sidewalks, where they have to be stepped over or around, as they did during the saloon days prior to prohibition.

There is every reason to believe that Sycamore will never again gather in groups to talk over a shooting such as the famous St. Valentine's Day gang massacre on North Clark Street in Chicago in 1929. Some people from here made a special trip to the city just to view the garage where the killing of seven gangsters in one twenty second gunning had occurred.

The world might be better off with no liquor at all if the stuff was still unknown, but as long as it is known for what it is, certain people will drink in spite of law, religious pleading or good sense.

SYCAMORE'S MID-WINTER FAIR

Newspapers and magazines devoted to agriculture in both the United States and Canada, gave Sycamore's Mid-Winter Fair a great amount of excellent publicity years ago when the fairs were held more regularly and when much emphasis was placed on farm produce. The first one, known as The Sycamore Mid-Winter Fair and Farmer's Institute, was held from February 8th to 10th in 1912. The last one, known simply as the Mid-Winter Fair was held in 1954.

Only the old timers here will remember that first fair. Its main show building was in what is now the DeKalb Agricultural Association building east of the public library. In 1912 the "Ag" building was referred to as the Townsend Stables.

In 1912 - Horses

The horse exhibit was in this stable building. Stalls all along the east side of the building were separated from the rest of the structure by a wall, and in the center section the speaking and entertainment programs were staged.

Across the street in the building that was the first hotel or rooming house in the city, the poultry exhibits were a prime attraction. Incidentally, when Uncle Sam took over this land in 1914 to erect the post office, this building was moved north to the corner of Page and Main streets where it remained until it was destroyed by fire two or three years ago.

The domestic science exhibits for that 1912 Fair were held in the library building, and cattle were displayed in the Ryan stables on north Maple Street. The old Ryan building is another of Sycamore's old landmarks which has given way to progress; in April of 1959 it was torn down to make room for a new parking lot.

Farm Club

According to Sycamore news files, the fair was under the auspices of the Sycamore Farmer's Club which had for its incorporated purposes the praiseworthy aim: "to promote more profitable and permanent methods of agriculture."

That 1912 club was headed by Frank Lloyd, president; G. Sumner Townsend, vice president; and George A. Fox, secre-

tary. Others of the club who aided greatly were Frederick B. Townsend, owner of the stables, Ralph Countryman and Henry H. Parke.

In 1916, when the fourth fair was held, its size and scope had expanded so far that it was necessary to rent two large circus tents. They were set up on the brick pavement in front of the Townsend Stables.

It is interesting to note that it was in the summer of 1912 that east State Street, from the library corner to the eastern city limits, was paved with bricks for the first time. With the necessary addition of the circus tents as the fair grew, it was possible to drive the tent stakes in the old dirt road merely by loosening and removing a few bricks here and there. After Rt. 64 was paved with cement, of course, it was impossible to erect tents in the street.

In more recent years the fair was held in the huge state armory. By then the gradual disappearance of horses and the arrival of autos and trucks changed the nature of the fair into primarily an auto show. Also, the advent of television, home freezers, electric washers and driers, and other modern day appliances, created an almost magic like replacement in the type of exhibits in the main building as compared with those of 1912.

FRED ROTE THE BARBER
BECOMES AN EXPERT MECHANIC
AND WINS BET

A few Sycamore people of today may remember an auto of the early 1900's known as the Brush. This story concerns Mr. George Radford, an engineer for what was then known as Turner Brass Works, now called Turner Corporation. Mr. Radford was the proud owner of a Brush.

Let us hasten to add that a factory employee owning a car in those days was important enough to merit talk and cause his friends to ask, "Where is he getting all the money?" In fact there is glaring proof of the fact that car owners were looked down upon by industrial bosses of that time. A Sycamore man (not George Radford) bought a used car because he lived a long distance from the old Chicago Insulated Wire mill where he was employed.

Buys Car - Loses Job

This particular employee drove his car to work the following Monday morning. By noon the news had reached the high command in the front office. The big chief blew up and promptly ordered the car owner dismissed. He made it stick, too. There was no union to protect the corporation slave of that era. Men worked ten to twelve hours a day for five days and nine or ten hours on Saturday. A few were lucky enough to have all Saturday afternoon off!

Now, to get back to Mr. Radford and his Brush. On one Saturday afternoon he decided to get a shave and a haircut. He had just been paid so had the 25 cents necessary for the haircut and the 10 cents required for the shave. His favorite barber was Fred Rote, located where McMillan's shop is today.

George drove his Brush runabout up to Fred's place and parked it. He had just finished polishing it up. The bright firewagon red, trimmed with the shining brass around the hood, and those big, brass carbide lamps all glistened beautifully. People paused and looked a second time at the brilliant little bus.

Emerging not long afterward from the barber shop, Radford set all the gadgets to prepare starting the motor of his car. No self-starter had yet been devised for autos so it was necessary to crank. Right there is where the trouble started. He

cranked and cranked, rested a few minutes and cranked again. The little vehicle shook from side to side as his temper began to mount, and he angrily turned the crank with increased vigor.

Some time later he wearied of it all and slowly journeyed to the nearest saloon to fortify himself with a couple of beers and a shot of "ye olde crowe." Then back to the cranking.

Bets Half Dollar

Much of the afternoon had now been consumed in the terrific effort to start the Brush. Mr. Radford was about to give up and seek the aid of Dave Rykert, owner of the first commercial garage in Sycamore, who was located just around the corner on south California Street.

About that time Fred Rote's shop became empty and Fred stepped outside for a breath of fresh air. He lighted a cigar as he began razzing his earlier customer about the stubbornness of his Brush. "Well," shouted Radford, "if you can do any better about starting this "##!#!#* thing, I'll give you a half dollar."

Wins

There was no such thing as inflation in those days, and a half dollar would buy groceries enough for an entire family's Sunday dinner, so naturally Fred's eyes shone with great anticipation as he stepped forward and said, "George, I'll take that bet."

Fred leaned over, carefully adjusted his cigar to the proper angle, took a firm grip on the crank, and gave it one sharp turn. The Brush started purring as if nothing at all had ever been wrong.

Radford was on the verge of coming down with a fit. After regaining his mental equilibrium, he started to swear. Finally, running out of wind, he reached into his pants pocket and sorrowfully withdrew a great, big half dollar and gave it to Fred. He got into his Brush and drove around the corner on Somonauk Street and on to his home on Chauncey Street. It is reported that it was the first Saturday night in years that he failed to go out with the gang. Weariness from an afternoon of cranking, plus the loss of that precious half dollar, was just too much for the poor guy.

We wonder if Fred Rote got himself a shave, haircut and a beer with that fifty cents.

Since this book is to a great extent of an historical nature, we feel it only fitting that we pause and pay tribute to Fred, who when he retired was the dean of active barbers in this city. It is astonishing, but true, that he cut the hair of four generations of one family, the Whipples. Some years ago he had a youngster in his barber chair, sitting on the proverbial board laid across the chair arms. The little guy suddenly spoke up and said, "You cut my great grandpa's hair too, didn't cha?"

So it was good to hear Fred say, when we talked to him not long after his 85th birthday in 1959, "I was a barber for 60 years, and over half a century of them were spent here in Sycamore. I enjoyed every one of those years."

Even though we are saddened to report that he passed away this summer of 1960, we are glad that in our lifetime we had the opportunity of knowing - Fred Rote, barber.

Any small community would be proud and happy to be able to point out a store building that has seen the same type of retail business last through a century. Then, too, more pride can be taken in the story when four generations of one family name are conducting that same business. Such can be said of the hardware store of Wylde and Son on the northwest corner of State and Maple Streets. This one Sycamore business has survived wars and depressions for over a century under the same name.

As near as can be found in the official records, Daniel B. James built the three story building in 1857 and later sold it to Reuben Ellwood. At that time it was the tallest and largest building in the community. For two years it was occupied by a clothing retailer, then in 1859 the Haight brothers bought it and opened a hardware business. That was 101 years ago, as this book is being prepared.

Story of Wylde's Begins

In 1892 John Wylde instituted a farm implement business in a building just north of the present Baptist Church on South Maple Street. He also acted as an auctioneer. His implement firm stocked about 25 items.

In 1896 Walter Wylde became a partner in the business with his father, and, being a bit more progressive minded, he began adding more hardware items. In 1910 James Shaw moved in from a Mayfield farm and bought out John Wylde's share of the firm and became a partner with Walter, under the firm of Wylde and Shaw.

It was in 1911 that this firm bought the building, fixtures and stock of Haight Brothers Hardware and moved into the State Street location. For the past 49 years this business has been conducted under the name of Wylde.

Royal J. Wylde, son of Walter, bought out Mr. Shaw's share of the firm in 1923, and the name was changed to Wylde and Son. In 1939 Royal bought his father's share and even though it was the first and only period in history that this business was owned by one man, the firm name of Wylde and Son was retained.

In 1947, having completed his service in the armed forces of World War II, James Wylde, Royal's son, returned to his

home here and bought a half interest in the business. Once again the firm was true to its name, "Wylde and Son", with the added touch of, "The Hardware Men." When he acquired his share of the business, James Wylde became the fourth generation member of the firm.

Expand in 1951

Years before, the original Ellwood building had been divided into two separate retail establishments with a stairway between them. In 1950-1951 Wylde and Son obtained the west half of the building, tore the wall out, and remodeled it into the spacious store as you see it today. Beginning with an open house, held after completion of the modernization, a famous establishment was well on its way into the second century of operation under the same family name.

From a business of 25 items, it has grown to one of over 40,000 products. It has also outgrown its old round stove heater and now is air-conditioned. Time has erased the club-room atmosphere of the little space behind the old stove.

Checkers and Politics

Years ago the old timers gathered there almost daily to discuss politics, play checkers and exchange news while they puffed on their pipes.

Another change is noted in the clerks. There was a time when a lady clerk in a hardware store would have been talked about. "The very idea. That's a man's store!" Today, very nice and congenial lady clerks are accepted just as naturally as rain and Christmas.

The kind of stock has changed in some respects, also. Yep, they continue to have nuts, bolts, and nails, but there are no more coal stoves. You can buy a power lawnmower but no more surrey fringe. Electric light bulbs can be obtained there, but try to find a kerosene lamp.

No Spitoons For Sale

You can still buy metal water pails, but water pails made of plastic are getting more and more popular. Yes, you can get ice skates if you wait for them, but they are no longer stocked very much here. No more horse and buggy harness, but you

can buy a dandy scooter. Cigarette lighters? Yes, but no more spittoons. Yes, the stock has changed, and will continue to change with time - - but the name of Wylde and Son, The Hardware Men, lives on.

A humorous story is told of a time when a sparrow was found flitting around inside the store one morning. Whether it was Jim Shaw or Walter Wylde is not recalled, but one of them went to the gun case, loaded a 22 caliber rifle and fired at the bird. With excellent accuracy he killed the sparrow, but the bullet sped through the bird and punctured a half dozen sprinkling cans hanging just behind where the bird had been perched. This, of course, caused much laughter for the pipe smoking hot stove league in the rear of the store. It also created much good natured conversation for days afterward.

AGED MAN, ILL AND DEMENTED
SHOOTS CHIEF OF POLICE

On November 8, 1914, occurred the only instance in Sycamore's history in which a police officer was shot. It was late in the afternoon that Chief of Police Joseph Ogden was shot by the aged and somewhat demented Samuel Atkinson. The chief survived, but was never well after the injury. The elderly gunman took his own life.

Atkinson, who was afflicted with asthma and arthritis, had been estranged from his wife for several months. Although he had difficulty getting about even with the use of a cane, he had been pestering his wife and at times threatened her with violence.

Had Been Warned

Authorities had already been to Atkinson's home on Fair Street several times; once on a complaint that he was cruel to his horses. Investigation disclosed that the animals were not being properly fed and one had to be shot. He had been warned several times to cease annoying his wife. She had gone to live with a relative on Home Street.

On this quiet Sunday afternoon, which happened to be a beautiful, mild day for that time of the year, Atkinson had gone to his wife's Home Street address and threatened her life. She locked all the doors and asked someone to call the police. For a time Atkinson hid in the chicken coop, but later he was frightened away when he learned the police were looking for him.

He finally returned to his home, and it was there that Chief Ogden caught up with him and arrested him. Having no squad car in those days, it was necessary to walk him all the way to the city jail.

W. C. Olmacher, who operated a plumbing and heating business where the Moose Lodge is now located, was on his way to his shop when he spotted the chief and his prisoner. As he crossed the street in front of the Methodist Church he noticed that Atkinson was trailing along behind the chief and heard him mumble, "Why do you pick on me all the time?"

Seconds after they disappeared out of his sight Olmacher heard a shot and turned to see Atkinson, who had apparently forgotten all about his arthritis, run across Somonauk Street

headed west down the alley.

Olmacher hurried to the wounded officer's prone body, which lay face down in front of the Elk's Club, and repeatedly asked, "Who did it?" He was able to hear the chief say "Atkinson." With the help of others who arrived on the scene, Ogden was rushed to the hospital and night officer Fred Mitchell was called back to duty.

Atkinson A Suicide

After seeing to it that Ogden was well taken care of at the hospital, Mitchell started out in search of the gunman. He had already been tracked down by some men who had heard the shot and had seen him running. He was found dead, his body draped over a cistern at the rear of the house now owned by John Chesnutt on Sacramento Street. He had shot himself in the mouth.

A note that Atkinson had written (found later in his coat pocket) indicated that he had planned to murder his wife and lay the blame on the police chief.

After spending several weeks in the hospital Chief Ogden finally recovered and was able to make a living for himself and family, but he was never as active and robust as before. He was blinded for a period of time as a result of the shooting, but regained his sight before leaving the hospital. No attempt was made to remove the bullet for fear that surgery might take his life.

In his younger years, Ogden was noted as a man of great strength. For a long time prior to becoming chief of police he had operated a drayage business. Records show that his son Joe took over the drayage business in later years.

TELLS TALE OF FOUR HOUR TRIP FROM ST. CHARLES TO SYCAMORE

Anyone who thinks he has troubles with his automobile these days of almost everlasting tires and smooth running engines, should ask questions of old timers and learn of a day when motorists really had troubles.

Consider the day years ago when James (Jinx) Ryan, Leon (Skinny) Rote, and Charles (Kug) Kugler decided to see a ball game at St. Charles. Perhaps Sycamore High was playing the Saints there. This happened long ago, and none of the people involved are living in Sycamore now, so the official details are somewhat lacking. Memory seems to tell us that it was Ryan who owned the car.

The trio climbed into an aged coupe, and as they wearily told the tale after they returned, all went well on the way to St. Charles, but at the river city their troubles started. Something went wrong with the motor and they spent a lengthy time tinkering with it until they teased the old jalopy into running again. But that was just a prelude to the next act.

Good Old Days ?

On the way home all 3 boys experienced a genuine workout as the tires went bad. When they arrived back in Sycamore, they looked as if they had rolled in the road. There was no paving then, and the old State Road from here to St. Charles was always topped with a couple of inches of dust during the hot, dry weather.

In Thompson's restaurant, where they dove into a vast amount of food after their terrific trip, they had everyone stopped with laughter as they related their "horrible" story.

In those days tires were on what they called demountable rims with clincher rings that fitted tightly into a groove on the edge of the tire. A flat tire at any time meant that a real tough job had to be done with tire irons, pliers and other tools. Included in the task was the chore of placing a patch on the inner tube where the puncture had occurred. If a blowout, rather than a puncture, was the cause of the trouble, it meant that a "boot" (those days they used a piece of leather) had to be used between the tube and the tire casing when they were put back on the rim. The boot, while not 100 percent effective, did add some strength

to the weakened casing and would, at least temporarily, prevent it from blowing out at the same spot.

All in all, they experienced thirteen punctures and two blowouts between the two towns. All four tires had to be removed at least once. In those days it was seldom that anyone could afford a spare tire, and if they could, there wasn't space for carrying more than one. In this instance, the boys had no spare at all.

Then too, removing, repairing and replacing the tire was only half the job. What really wore out the Sycamore trio was pumping. As each repair was made, it was necessary to refill the inner tube with air by using a hand pump. On a hot day the entire procedure would try the patience of Job and required the strength of Samson.

Car For Sale

As each repair was made, and the boys wearily climbed back into the coupe, they thought all would be well and they'd soon be back home for food and a cool drink.

Then - there would be a loud POP, or maybe it would be one of those aggravating whistles, as another puncture occurred. After a rash of grumbling in Biblical terms, accompanied by several "prayers", they all climbed out, jacked up the chariot, and went to work again. Making it still worse, as they said later, was the fact that not one motorist came by all that time. A few farm wagons and one or two buggies rattled by but, of course, they had no tools for repairing tires. Adding pain to their already worn-to-frazzle feelings was the fact that the farm folk laughed and laughed at the boys and their troubles.

The trip may have established a world's record for slow movement between St. Charles and Sycamore as it required over four hours. The first thing Ryan said, as he wearily climbed out of the car in Sycamore, was: "Does anyone want to buy a car - CHEAP?"

SMALL POX FORCED SYCAMORE MEDIC TO CAMP OUTSIDE CITY

In the spring of 1915 Sycamore and a wide area around it experienced a small pox epidemic. No deaths occurred, but Dr. I. S. Evans, the only doctor presently living here, estimates that there may have been as many as 150 cases in and around the city.

A most interesting incident accompanying the epidemic was the fact that Dr. Harry W. Trigger, a young doctor practicing here, came down with the disease. As a result, authorities asked him to cease practice temporarily. Because he was not married and had no home as yet, and was not ill enough to require hospitalization, he lived just outside the city limits on the north edge of Sycamore until he recovered.

Dr. Trigger graduated from medical school and received his license to practice in 1913. In Sycamore, his second realm of practice, he became interested in a Miss Mary Butler, a nice young lady who lived on west Exchange Street. She picked up the germ somehow and was ordered quarantined. It was as a result of keeping company with her that the doctor contracted the disease.

Vaccination Campaign

Doctors were swamped with demands for vaccinations as a result of the epidemic. Physicians practicing here at the time were: Dr. C. B. Brown; the Nesbitt brothers, Dr. George and Dr. John; Dr. A. D. Blagden and Dr. F. H. Bell. A campaign was staged in an effort to obtain a 100 percent vaccination in the schools. It was a fair success; only a very few refused.

The epidemic got its start in Sycamore when a school girl was found to be ill with it. Because others in the school had been exposed before she realized she was ill, the disease gained a head start. But the vaccination campaign did much good; our town has never since experienced a small pox epidemic.

There may be a message for today's battle against polio in the results of that long ago small pox adventure. If enough people take heed by accepting anti-polio vaccine, there is a very strong probability that polio can be stamped out the same as small pox and several other diseases have been in the last few decades.

Two Husbands Happy

While discussing the small pox story, Dr. Evans related a humorous incident that occurred during the epidemic. He was taking care of a woman patient who was suffering with the dread illness. After he had finished taking her temperature, her husband took him to one side and wanted to know what that thing was that the doctor had stuck in his wife's mouth. When told it was a medical thermometer, he next wanted to know how much one cost. Informed that he could obtain one for \$1.50, he said, "By gosh, I'm going to get one and use it often. First time my wife has stopped talking while she's awake in a heck of a while!"

In a more recent instance, Sycamore's dean of the medical profession tells of having very successfully aided a Sycamore wife to reduce her weight. She was very much pleased and so was her husband. The husband made a special point to call on the doctor and thank him profusely and congratulate him. Said he, "It's wonderful. Now I won't have to buy her any more big clothes. She can make a lot of smaller dresses out of the old big ones!"

The mention of Dr. Brown in a previous paragraph stirs memories. He was short, caustic in his use of words and wore a beard. He practiced medicine for at least a half century. At one time he retired, but Mrs. James Crosby became seriously ill and the family succeeded in persuading the elderly doctor to end his retirement as an act of mercy. He did so and successfully performed surgery on her.

Dr. George Nesbitt was another interesting medic and a character of his time. A lover of all sorts of animals, he had many pets. He maintained a fine stable of well kept horses, and at one time had as pets a dog, a raccoon, a parrot and a large pigeon ranch in which his close friend the late E. G. Cooper had an interest.

Dr. Nesbitt's home, located where the National Tea Store is now located, was a show place of the community. For many years a huge pine tree on his lawn was decorated at Christmas time at his own expense.

He enjoyed hunting, fishing and trap shooting. He and Mr. Cooper traveled widely to take part in state and national trap shoots until his eyes and hands began to falter with age.

Dr. F. H. Bell was a proud patriot the day he was commissioned for duty as an army medic in World War I. He returned from France with a splendid record of service, too.

All of the medics mentioned above started their careers in the horse and buggy days, when rural calls in the dead of the winter, or on treacherous mud roads in the spring, were real rugged trips.

Earlier Epidemics

Between 60 or 63 years ago, Sycamore and farm territory for some miles around, suffered a far more serious small pox epidemic. There were some deaths. Schools were closed and many who recovered were pock-marked for the balance of their lives.

A large section of the community inside the city limits was fenced off and quarantined en masse. Due to the great danger involved, it was difficult to find nurses who either were immune or had been vaccinated. That factor in itself caused much suffering and no doubt caused some of the deaths.

So fearful of the disease were some people that authorities took drastic measures to prevent a panic. As old timers recall the epidemic, (there are no official records of the period to be found) they say the first death was that of Alderman Kenyon who lived on Edward Street.

Extraordinary Precautions

There was no "Pomp and Circumstance" procession for that funeral. The occasion was far too grim. The Alderman's body was removed through a window of his home at night. It was placed in a wagon and taken away for burial; a very depressing memory for his family.

To keep children as close to their homes as possible, and prevent them from communicating with other children, parents took exceptional precautions. Even though basements did not have the fancy rumpus rooms of these modern times, an effort was made to make them into playrooms. Toys, hammocks and other things attractive to children were gathered in spare rooms.

This stay-at-home policy, because of the danger of contagion, had a marked economic effect on the local business men.

The photo below shows the Chicago Insulated Wire Company plant which burned the night of March 20, 1919.



CITY LEARNED FIRE FIGHTING
THE HARD WAY
WITH HUMOROUS TINTS

The humor of fire fighting is most generally lost in the gloom of the disasters. As a result, the news stories and official records lack much to smile about. Most of the incidents related in the next paragraph or two came from Charles Butzow, who served faithfully as fire chief for some 35 years in Sycamore.

Exact dates of these little ditties are not available, in fact the dates are not necessary. Several times firemen were embarrassed and housewives were shocked as firemen swarmed over their homes. Alarms were oft turned in without notifying residents that their homes were on fire. On several such occasions the housewife was at home taking a bath. The ladies, "God bless 'em", nearly fainted as firemen climbed ladders unintentionally laid up alongside, or over, bathroom windows!

Fireman Fixes Flat

One quiet afternoon back in the 30's the fire truck roared to a stop in front of what was then the Varty home on Somonauk Street, just north of Waterman Street. The most surprised person was Mrs. John F. Erlenborn (Miriam Varty).

She had telephoned Butzow's garage to ask for help because she had a flat tire. A mechanic at the garage, who also was a volunteer fireman, answered the phone and misunderstood the word "tire" and thought there was a fire. The record isn't clear as to whether or not the fireman fixed the flat.

Two trucks answered a call to Anaconda Wire and Cable Company one day, but one of them never arrived. It ran out of gas just across State Street - a block and a half from the station.

Jesperson Scared

Toward the end of a battle with a stubborn blaze on DeKalb Avenue on one occasion, the then Assistant Fire Chief George Jesperson found it absolutely necessary to seek a washroom. The one marked "WOMEN" was the only one available at the scene. He looked around, figured the coast was clear, and went in.

Today's assistant chief, James Foster, took note and approached the washroom door and, setting his vocal chords to imitate those of a woman, he began speaking as he started to open the door. About that time there came a frantic yell that arose to a screaming pitch, "Bud, Bud, PLEASE don't let her in here, PLEASE!" George says today that it was the biggest scare he ever had in all of his years of fire fighting.

Students were throwing things out of the windows during the fire which destroyed St. Albans school gym in 1919. Somebody very carefully removed a window screen on the second floor and dropped it. The screen landed on the head of a Sycamore high school boy walking along below. The boy didn't go down, but he staggered as if drunk for several minutes. Firemen who saw it get a good laugh out of the memory of it even today. The boy was not seriously hurt.

Coffey Goes Down

Donald V. Coffey, of Sycamore Sons baseball fame, lived dangerously in his youthful days. He was always ready to help in times of trouble. When an alarm called firemen to the scene of an elevator fire on Sacramento Street near the Leader Oil plant, Coffey appeared on the scene also.

The fire seemed to be at the top, so Coffey took the elevator and went on up. He was promptly soaked with water and hit by flying glass as the firemen played the water pressure on the top window of the structure. Coffey was just recovering from that when the fire put the elevator out of commission and it zoomed all the way to the bottom, about 60 feet, with a big thump. Although he did not get hurt seriously, he was limping and nursing numerous bruises, sore eyes and a cough for about a week.

Heavy Losses

Seriously, Sycamore has had its share of damaging blazes over the past 30 years. On June 5, 1934, the Miles Equipment Company plant burned on Park Avenue with a loss of \$40,000. It was never rebuilt. That area is now owned by Diamond Wire and Cable Company and is the site of their newly completed addition.

Down town Sycamore has had at least three bad ones in that time beginning with the burning of the old Ward Opera House

on July 25, 1941. This, too, was a loss of \$40,000, and again the occupants did not rebuild. At the time of the fire, the theater section was occupied by the Sycamore Garment factory. Below it were located two taverns; one was Joe Schaack's and the other was John Schneider's. This location was above what is now the Sycamore Shoe Store and Stiles for Style.

The present Fire Chief, Henry Binder, learned at an early age what a terrible thing a fire can be. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. Binder, and his three brothers and himself, were driven out when their home burned the morning of April 9, 1917.

The late B. F. Wyman discovered the fire shortly after midnight and aroused the family before he turned in the alarm. The Binders lost everything owned. The elder Mr. Binder was painfully bruised and burned when the structure came crashing down on him as he aided the family to escape. Shortly after the event he became a volunteer fireman and, until ill health ended his career, was one of the most energetic and courageous men of the entire SFD.

But, it was the year 1919 that proved notable for the department. It fought its first \$150,000 fire that year and also inaugurated a motor truck and a more efficient duty schedule.

Wire Plant Fire

One of the greatest fire disasters of Sycamore's 100 year history occurred the night of March 20, 1919, when the greater part of the old Chicago Insulated Wire Manufacturing Company plant was destroyed. (See photo on page 153). Firemen were called at 11:00 that evening and were on duty all night. This plant was located where the present Anaconda Wire and Cable Company plant is now located.

A high northwest wind, combined with a lack of normal water pressure, hampered the firemen in their efforts to control the blaze. With the help of DeKalb's fire department other buildings and nearby homes were saved.

A few days later Frank Mitchell, engineer in charge of the power plant at Chicago Insulated for 20 years, lost his life when a fire-weakened brick wall was blown over and he was buried under the avalanche. He had been enjoying his first vacation in 20 years, but had been called back to work to help clear out the power plant debris.

As a result of that disaster, the Sycamore city council voted 7 to 1 to buy a \$5,000 motor driven fire truck. Also, Butzow Brothers, who maintained a first class garage of considerable size, entered into a contract with the city to set up a fire station. An arrangement was soon made whereby one man slept there nights to maintain a night fire "crew" for the first time in the city's history. Charles Butzow became chief of the department.

Fire Handicaps - 1910

Sycamore had experienced a factory fire that was almost as bad as the one at the wire factory. It happened on the night of January 9, 1910 when the Sycamore Mop factory burned. The plant was located where the parking lot west of the State Theater is today.

It was a three story building where oiled dust mops were manufactured. The temperature was below zero that night, and again a strong northwest wind was a destructive factor. But the most serious incident, that probably did more than any other one thing to make the disaster complete, was the fact that the box alarm failed to sound at the Sycamore Light and Power Company where the steam fire whistle was located. It was necessary for the night police officer to run all the way to the power plant to get the alarm sounded that called the volunteer firemen to duty.

There were no fire alarm radios in the homes of the firemen, as there are today, and no motorized fire truck either. Remember, this was in 1910. It was necessary for draymen to hitch up horses at their homes, drive to the fire station, transfer the team to the two-wheeled hose cart and then race to the fire.

In view of all the elapsed time mentioned above, fires in the old days got such a head start that it was a real problem to bring them under control. Such was the case this night of January 9th. The fire reached a huge oil vat and the resulting explosion spread the flames throughout the entire structure.

Bitter Humor

The assistant fire chief at that time, John Young, lived where the Coultrip Funeral home is now located, just one block north of where the fire raged. Because the wind was in such direction as to carry the sound of the fire whistle in the opposite

direction of his home, he failed to hear the alarm. He didn't know until the next morning that there had been a fire.

Fire fighters became walking icebergs and suffered frozen fingers and faces, as well as severe burns. Making the damage complete for the city, the factory was never rebuilt. The catastrophe was considered a \$100,000 loss.

Another Factory Lost

Another \$100,000 fire occurred on November 30, 1932, when the large Borden milk plant, located just north of what is now the Ideal Industries, Inc., was completely destroyed. Here again history repeated itself and the plant was not rebuilt. At the time of the fire, Bordens was paying its workers the highest hourly wage rates of any industry in the city.

In an investigation after the blaze, it was discovered that a four inch water main was serving this area of the city, where there was supposed to have been a six inch pipe. Shortly thereafter the city got busy and installed the proper six inch mains.

Realize Pumper Needed

It was the loss of a fine gymnasium building at St. Albans School for Boys that encouraged the aldermen to furnish the SFD with a fire truck having its own water pumper.

The fire occurred the afternoon of June 22, 1923 at a time when the city's water pumps were not in operation. Firemen had to work with standpipe pressure alone, and it was nil. The DeKalb department sent over their big pumper, In speeding over here, the DeKalb truck burned out a bearing, but kept on coming and they helped fight the fire so successfully that the main academy building, just three feet from the burning gym, was saved.

The city made up its collective mind then that never again would it be endangered by lack of water pumps. Our present trucks are equipped with the latest model pumps having capacity for handling several thousand gallons of water per hour at an extreme pressure.

More Recent Losses

Another industrial blaze ruined the J. V. Patten furnace company plant the night of December 29, 1946 at a loss of over

\$125,000. This thriving industry rebuilt and is in operation at the same spot at the corner of Harvester Street and DeKalb Avenue.

The next major blaze was that which swept away the third floor of the old building owned by Lee Hagen who operates his Ace Hardware store on the first floor. The loss here was set at \$75,000. The third floor was not replaced, but the two lower floors were rehabilitated.

* * * * *

In talking to our fire chiefs and their splendid group of volunteers one is impressed with their genuine esprit' de corps. And, too, they are quick to point out the wonderful cooperation of other departments in neighboring towns who have responded to a call for assistance at times of a major fire.

WARNING UNHEEDED,
HUGE HAYPRESS IS
BURNED TO ASHES

A fire, that could have been halted if the wonderment and question of a Sycamore lady had been given attention, ruined what was known as the old hay press building in about 1915 or 1916. It was located at the northwest corner of the intersection of DeKalb Avenue and Sacramento Street, where Sibley's cleaning shop and the Corey & Hoffman filling station are now located.

Mrs. Charles Masterson, who lived on DeKalb Avenue about a block and a half west of the hay press, was passing the scene early in the evening. She went directly to the then active Chicago and North Western Railroad station across the street. There she asked what was being stored in the big shed at the time, and was told, "Many tons of baled hay, Why?"

"Well, I heard a most peculiar noise as I was going by and I think someone should look in there," she said.

No one looked in. The men thought it was just a bit of imagination. A short time later there was a loud whoom, and the area was suddenly filled with smoke. A fire alarm was turned in, but the firemen might as well have brought pails instead of hoses. There was little or no water pressure. Fire hoses could not so much as send water over telephone wires that night.

By using water pails the roof of a little house next door to the west was saved. The press and its hay became ashes. The corrugated sheet metal sides of the freight shed of the C&NW became almost red hot; spectators burned their hands and clothing when they touched it.

DEKALB MAN IS KILLED
WHEN GAS PLANT LINE BLOWS

A tremendous jar, and a flash that appeared as if lightning were blazing, brought death to Charles James McCabe, DeKalb man, between 3:30 and 4:00 o'clock the afternoon of December 18, 1924. Gas had exploded in the basement of the Sycamore office of the Northern Illinois Gas Company on west Elm Street, where the First Savings and Loan Association offices are now located.

McCabe, wearing a gas mask, had entered the basement vault where a regulator controlled the pressure of gas into the mains. He was in the act of blowing rust from the lines with high pressure gas when the explosion occurred. The cause of the explosion was never learned.

W. C. Taylor, who died several years later, had been employed by the gas company for three years, and was assisting McCabe. It was Taylor's job to pump fresh air into McCabe's mask. Taylor was outside at the front of, and about four feet from the building. The force of the explosion blew him several feet backward, but he called for help and ran to the rear of the building with the idea of rescuing his fellow worker. Fire in the basement stairway forced him back.

Find Body

After Fire Chief Charles Butzow and the Sycamore fire department had quelled the resulting blaze, the late Frank Binder, a most active volunteer fireman and father of today's fire chief, entered the basement and found McCabe's body. There was over three feet of water in the basement as a result of the battle to halt the fire.

Taylor testified at the inquest that McCabe had opened the high pressure valve three times and shut it off again; the idea being to allow the pressure thus suddenly released, to clear the pipe line. Taylor said he could hear the gas blasts when the valve was opened. When the valve was opened for the fourth time, the explosion happened.

LUMBER YARD SAVED
BY THE MYSTERIOUS
FIRE FIGHTING GREMLINS

Charles Butzow, who was fire chief at the time of the lumber yard mystery unfolded in the story below, suggested that lumber yards insert windows in shed doors or walls so that police, or others passing by when the yards are closed, could see smoke or flames inside. His idea was, and still is, that many disastrous lumber yard fires could be seen at their beginning and much property saved thereby.

Destruction of the Sycamore Lumber Company by fire in August of 1959, with a loss of \$250,000, recalled a mystery that seemed like a miracle that occurred at the Farmer's Grain and Lumber Company in May of 1947. A small pick-up truck left inside a shed was completely ruined by fire without causing a general blaze in the yard.

Elmer Brooke, for many years manager of the 42 year old establishment, reported the occurrence at the time. He is as much puzzled thirteen years later as he was then. That morning he opened the big doors of the main shed, as he always did, but was genuinely startled to note almost at once that the truck had burned during the night. It was not in ashes, but it was beyond repair.

Melted Glass

Many remarkable things were noted in the examination of the scene. In the first place, a large American flag had been hanging downward from a cross-beam in the shed, and its lower end was just a short distance above the little truck - yet it didn't catch on fire! It must have been guarded by gremlins.

The gas tank of the truck was empty - apparently burned out without exploding. The windshield glass had melted. The molten glass had flowed down inside the truck dashboard. After the fire extinguished itself, the glass hardened again and looked exactly like winter icicles hanging there.

The cause of the fire was never determined. The real mystery was how the fire in the truck ended without setting fire to that cloth flag just above it.

Although the Sycamore Lumber Company fire of 1959 is

so recent that it should not be included in a book of historical events that generally date back before 1940, liberty is taken with the book in order to point out an interesting fact that was missed by the newsmen at the time.

That fire was fought by the largest assemblage of fire fighting crews and apparatus in the 124 year history of this city. Help was brought in from DeKalb, Maple Park, Cortland, Genoa and Kirkland.

Eight trucks battled the huge blaze. Sycamore's entire volunteer department was on the job, plus firemen from all five towns mentioned above. Hoses were laid from four hydrants so that the fire could be fought from four sides.

The value of a cooperative help plan, plenty of apparatus and that vital thing that, without it all the apparatus in the world would be useless, COURAGE, was firmly implanted on the minds of the great throng of spectators around the 1959 scene. The saving of the close-by theater, bowling alleys and Holub Industries, Inc., is undisputable testimony of the value of equipment, training and determination.

FALLS TO DEATH FROM PIERCE BLOCK CORNICE

Two young men, who had for two years specialized in hazardous painting jobs, had their partnership end in tragedy the evening of September 11, 1926. One of the two, Corwin Phillips, 24, died as a result of a fall from the top of the Pierce building at about 8:30 o'clock that evening. It is the only instance in Sycamore history in which a person lost his life due to a fall from a down town building.

The partner of Phillips was Robert McDonell, 27. Both men were from Milwaukee, and came to Sycamore after completing several jobs in Aurora. Their first job here was that of painting the water tower of the Illinois Wire & Cable Company, now Diamond Wire & Cable Co.

They had applied one coat of paint to the tank and had to wait for it to dry before applying another coat. While waiting, they sought more work. Mr. A. D. Gates, who then owned the Pierce building, decided the wide, metal cornice around the top edge of the building needed a coat of paint to protect it from the weather. An agreement was reached and the two men began to plan their job.

Lacked Equipment

They lacked equipment as their ladders could not possibly reach to the top of the third story. Borrowing a chair from Chris Mortenson, they arranged a rope carrier to be used as a seat from which to paint. At Lopstein's blacksmith shop they sought a huge S-shaped, double hook. The mechanics at the smithy made the hook as requested.

The two men then set up their apparatus and started to work late in the afternoon. Because they wanted to finish in a hurry, so as to get back to the wire factory tank, they decided to work late into the evening.

The hook was hung from the top of the building with its smaller, or bottom hook, holding the rope and chair. All went well until about 7:30 when they decided it was getting too dark to do a good job and they voted to quit. It was then they realized that it was going to be a much more difficult job getting the painter back up on the roof than it had been to get him down on the job.

Phillips was in the chair and McDonell was on the roof. Phillips first stood up in the chair and McDonell raised him far enough to permit him to get his fingers over the ledge, but in so doing they noticed that the hook had become free of the rope. McDonell made a terrific attempt to pull his partner upward by his wrists, but both men had been painting and the wet paint on their hands and arms acted like grease.

A Grim Moment

It must have been a terrible few seconds for both when they realized that Phillips was slowly sliding out of McDonell's wet hands - and then he fell. Because he had returned to a sitting position in the chair, and therefore, landed on the heavy rope, it was thought that the pad effect of the rope saved him from immediate death.

When he fell, Phillips landed directly in front of Police Magistrate Z. B. Mitchell and Mr. Gates, narrowly missing three young girls walking along at the moment. Another high school girl, hearing later that a man had fallen from the roof of the Pierce building, wanted to know, "Was he hurt?"

He lived until 7:30 the following evening. He was a single man and kept calling for his mother during his periods of consciousness. She was at his bedside when he died.

PIGEON RANCH NEAR SYCAMORE
IS NEWS OF TOP INTEREST

In a previous chapter of this book, reference was made to a pigeon ranch which was owned by Dr, George Nesbitt and E. G. Cooper.

Both of these gentlemen were among Sycamore's most ardent sportsmen for many, many years. They loved hunting and fishing, but perhaps their most favorite sport, and one at which they were both expert, was trap shooting.

Their many medals and trophies testified to their skill at busting the whirling little clay pigeons. No one has a record of their many prizes won in these meets all over the countryside, but it is safe to say that they were far superior to most of the competition they met.

They received considerable publicity when they started a real live pigeon ranch northeast of town several years ago. At one time they had as many as 97 varieties of both plain and fancy birds in their flock. Their total pigeon population numbered in the thousands.

ARMORY HERE
IS USED FOR
MILITARY AND CIVILIAN ACTIVITIES

Sycamore first became a National Guard town after World War I. It is permanent now with its impressive home, a large armory that is over 22 years old.

Before 1919 DeKalb was the home of what was then known as the Militia. Many Sycamore boys had trained with Company A, Third Regiment, Illinois Militia, and many more enlisted with the outfit when it left for the Mexican border in the 1916 mobilization that followed the Pancho Villa bandit raids from Mexico. World War I took the unit away from DeKalb permanently.

During World War I, a militia unit of the home guard type was organized in Sycamore under the leadership of a retired army officer, Captain Cowlin. It drilled in the high school corridors and on the paving of State Street.

Became Federal in 1922

In 1922 it became a regular unit in the Illinois Militia. In 1923 it was officially recognized as a National Guard Unit by Washington, and by that time had acquired the Townsend building next to the library for use as an armory.

Cowlin resigned and William Joslin, now residing in Rockford became the company commander. The unit became a Headquarters Company for the 129th Infantry Regiment, 65th Brigade, 33rd Division, Illinois National Guard.

For many years, militia units of Illinois had trained for two weeks every summer at the Illinois State Fair Grounds in Springfield, but in 1923 Camp Grant, near Rockford, became its training site. Camp Grant was a huge training spot for the regular army. After World War II, the government reverted it back to civilian uses. Camp Ripley, Minnesota, has now become the location for the two week summer field training.

Beginning in 1923, and for the next fifteen years, this Headquarters Company drilled on Monday evenings at their armory next to the library. In 1937, after some diligent work, much travel and artful persuasion, a new armory was assured. It was a donation of land, and the aid of the then active WPA,

(Works Progress Administration), that finally swung the project into Sycamore's favor.

An outlay of \$150,000 was first approved, but before the structure was completed another allotment of \$30,000 was required from the WPA.

Captain John F. Carlson, now retired, received orders to move in on July 1, 1938; the lease on the Townsend building expired at midnight June 30, 1938.

To War Again

A few years later the Company moved out and entrained for Camp Forrest, Tennessee. It never came back as a unit. It was necessary to reorganize and enlist an entire new company after World War II. The old unit had been broken up and its men assigned to other units all over the world.

The armory has been the scene of several major events other than military down through the years. Dances, band concerts, mid-winter home shows and mid-winter fairs are a few of the many events that have taken place here. In recent years it has been used by Northern Illinois University of DeKalb for its Homecoming Dance and its Annual Prom.

DOG TROUBLE IN THE CITY'S PAST
NOTED BY LOSS OF BOY'S EAR

Dog trouble! It has been going on for years. On a Sunday afternoon in July some years ago, in the Charter Grove area northeast of Sycamore, a 16 year old boy suffered a most painful injury from an attack by a dog.

He was a Wisconsin lad visiting with his parents at a home in Charter Grove. The dog had been lying quietly near the boy. The family group was listening to a record player when suddenly the dog lunged at the boy, grabbed his ear and had part of it chewed off before the animal could be yanked away.

Surgeons at the Sycamore Hospital had to remove what was left of the ear. Fortunately the boy's hearing was not impaired.

It was never determined what caused the attack, but the dog had been a very tame pet prior to that and had never shown any signs of viciousness.



HALLOWE'EN NITE
ONE OF BIG ADVENTURES
FOR DOZENS HERE

Hallowe'en nights of the past are always good topics of conversation and hilarity when old timers get together over a cup of coffee or glass of sarsaparilla. Looking back into the dim shadows of memory, one can, if he looks hard, see privies being tipped over, buckets of water pouring down on someone opening a front door, and thrill again at the adventure of hearing a shotgun boom a load of rock salt on its way.

In Sycamore along about 1917 or 1918 early one Hallowe'en evening, occurred an incident that will never be forgotten by those who still survive. A gang of about six typical 1917-18 lads had picked out a gent on east State Street who had been complaining about the high school students for over a year. The boys decided he had better learn that roaring youth should not be bothered by mere adults.

This gentleman had a newly-painted "Chic Sale", otherwise known as a privy in those days of outdoor plumbing. It was ideally located for Hallowe'en strategy - that is - it bordered an alley which made the get-away easy at both ends. The boys gathered as pre-arranged. One trio was dispatched to ring the old boy's front doorbell to attract his attention. The balance of the gang inserted 2 by 4's under the privy and started to lift.

The edifice started over, and at that moment a voice belled out as if in a tunnel. The boys gave one last heave and it toppled over. At that moment the air was shattered with the blast of a shotgun.

In the next few seconds the gang disappeared as fast as if they had been shot off a modern television set. Earl (Oley) Olson passed "Luke" McLagan so fast he created a vacuum in the alley. Ed McGibbons was lucky as he lived nearby and dove into his basement; in fact he slept in the cellar that night. Raymond Dye, it was learned next day, headed north and boarded a freight out of town.

The boys discovered the next day that the old gent had been inside the privy, but couldn't get the door open fast enough. The result was that he accidentally fired his shotgun through the roof of his nice, new, little hut. The shot blew a huge hole through its roof. The gang was satisfied - - for that year at least.

Many Laughable Stunts

Other incidents come to mind in rapid succession but lack the details such as dates and names. There was once a Chinese laundry on West State Street about where Bill's little lunch room building is presently located.

One Hallowe'en night the boys removed the Chinese laundry sign, placed it in front of Fred Rote's barber shop, and at the same time removed the striped barber pole and rebolted it to the laundry. There was quite a lot of Bad Chinese language to be heard the next day.

No one ever learned who it was that cut the cord and tied the remaining short end down on the steam whistle at the Sycamore Preserve Works one Hallowe'en, but the results were wonderful as far as the delights of boys were concerned. Until the steam was used up, the whistle roared into the night for almost half an hour after midnight.

Call Firemen

On another such All-Hallow's Eve a gang went to the work of using a ladder to lift a large, box-style, business district trash can to the top of a small house on Locust Street where they placed it over the chimney.

The boys waited around until the occupants returned home from a visit and stirred up the fire to take the chill off the air. Within a few moments the residents came running out screaming "Fire", and turned in the fire alarm. Firemen needed no hose. They just lifted the tin box off the chimney and opened the draft to clear the house of smoke.

Water and Giggles

A favorite stunt of the times was to tie two cans of cold water together in such manner that the cans would tip inward toward the sidewalk when the unsuspecting person walked into the cord which was stretched across the walk. The resulting screams as the cold water hit some dainty ankles brought great giggles of glee to many boys.

There was another stunt that was a bit more rare. A boy, holding a black cat, would hide behind a fence. When a person or persons walked by, the boy would let the cat go, and at the

same time give its tail a terrific squeeze. The cat would let loose with a high "C" screech and dart out at lightning like speed in front of the passersby, thus scaring them out of seventeen years growth. This was guaranteed to cause a small boy to laugh to himself for days afterward.

COURT ACTION IS MOSTLY SERIOUS
EXCEPT NOW AND THEN

In the paragraphs that follow are anecdotes recalled from the many splendid years of the life of the DeKalb County Bar Association. Most of them are funny, but one special note must be made regarding Attorney John B. Faissler, one of the most skilled lawyers who ever lived in Sycamore.

He is remembered best for the fact that at his time, he was the only lawyer in the state of Illinois who ever contrived to induce the State Supreme Court to change its decision. In fact, that is a mighty rare feat to gain from any high court anywhere. Space does not permit details of the famous case in this book, but it was what has come to be known as the Somonauk School case, which invloved some property and a right of way.

Faissler's secretary had a rugged time. He never wrote out anything for her. He dictated and she took notes while he paced up and down for hours at a time in his office in the Pierce building. He is said to have worn out hundreds of dollars worth of office rugs and several secretaries, as he prepared his famous "briefs" of thousands of words.

Carnes Was Witty

Another colorful figure of the county bar, and also a resident of Sycamore for a time, was Judge C. D. Carnes, whose wit was almost nationally known. A story is told of a boy who had committed some wrong and had come before him for sentencing. The lad was at the age when he thought it was smart to wisecrack at authority.

The wise jurist had an interesting drawl to his voice. On this occasion he said, "Well, -a-son, I-a-think a fine of about-a \$10 cash" - - right there the boy smirked out with, "Oh, shucks I got that in me ass pocket."

That irked the court a bit. The judge drawled on, "And-a bout-a-fifteen days in jail. Have you-a-got that-a in your ass pocket, too?" "Next case."

Visible Evidence

Then there was a time when Carnes was still a lawyer. The court was hearing a case involving a farmer and the farmer

was on the witness stand. Carnes began his questioning in a routine manner by asking his name, where he lived, etc.

He then asked, "You are a farmer?"

Answer, "Yes sir."

Question, "You raise grain?"

Answer, "Yes sir."

Question, "You raise cows?"

Answer, "Yes sir."

Question, "And chickens?"

About that time the opposing attorney entered an objection in this manner: "I object, your Honor. The mere fact that the witness said he is a farmer should be enough. These further questions are irrelevant, unnecessary and have no bearing on the case. Why, he'll be asking the witness if he raises jackasses next."

At that, attorney Carnes spoke up to say in his usual slow drawl, "No - ah - he hires them." With a meaningful glance at his opponent, he sat down while the judge rapped for order as the courtroom broke out in laughter.

Judge Pond

County Judge Pond was another of the fascinating members of the county bar. In addition to his work in DeKalb County, he had for years sat in on insanity case hearings for Cook County courts. At one time he was said to have heard at least 6,000 such cases.

Before we go into details, we must tell the reader that Judge Pond tried to treat all defendants in a kindly and fair manner. Defendants, who were charged with being ill with insanity, received an almost fatherly treatment from him.

As he told it, there was brought into his court one day a little old lady of neat appearance whose mind was described as sick. Judge Pond came down from the bench and, seating himself in front of the lady, began talking to her and questioning her. Over a considerable period of time he talked softly to her and tried to help her. All that time she made no move and said absolutely nothing.

The judge said, "You know, don't you, that your people think you are ill and that you should have help. No answer. "You

know you are in a county court?" No answer. The judge pointed to the states attorney's assistant, and others, asking her if she recognized them. No answer.

As he was about to end his questioning and turn the case back into formal channels, he asked, "And of course, you know who I am?" Waiting a second or two, he added, "I am the judge."

Then for the first time the lady perked up and spoke rather sharply, "THE HELL YOU ARE!"

A circuit judge has absolute rule over his court room and is treated with almost royal veneration. It is seldom that a lawyer breaks court courtesy to advise the court on certain things unless asked to do so.

Some years ago the circuit had the services of one Judge Slusser, who was along in years and apt to drowse through a dry case, especially on a warm summer day as was the case in this instance.

Witnesses had been heard all morning. Came noon and the court failed to adjourn for lunch. In fact the clock showed about 1:12 in the afternoon and both lawyers and witnesses were getting weary and hungry. Meanwhile Judge Slusser had almost gone to sleep and had lost track of the time.

Good Old Julius

Finally, Attorney Julius Matteson, one of the most caustic but best loved members of our county bar when he was alive, could stand it no longer. He moved up close to the judge's bench and spoke up loudly enough to awaken the old jurist, with the query, "Hell, Judge, don't you ever get hungry?"

For perhaps a moment there was one of the dramatic silences during which tension builds up. Everyone feared the judge might hold Matteson in contempt. Instead he looked at the clock and said, "Court's adjourned 'till tomorrow morning at 10:00 o'clock. And, Julius, tomorrow you bring a sandwich." Laughter ended the tension.

Lawyer All Het Up

During a serious crime trial involving several defendants charged with burglary some years ago, there occurred a funny

incident which caused a very informal adjournment of DeKalb County Circuit Court. Present day court people cannot recall the names, but readily remember the incident.

An intermission of the court session had just ended. Court and attorneys had been in the judge's chambers to discuss some point that neither side wanted the jurors to hear. Quietly, and with near solemnity, the court reconvened. A witness had just been called to the stand, when someone in the crowded spectators section began to snicker and point at a defending lawyer. The judge and others perked up and wondered why any person would dare risk discourteous action in a circuit court.

Singes His Paw

Suddenly one of the defending attorneys spoke out rather sharply with a loud "OUCH", and started running for the door. It seems he had absent-mindedly jammed his lighted pipe into his coat pocket when he left the judge's chambers. It had set his coat on fire and he had unsuspectingly stuck his hand into the hot pocket. The laughing spectator had apparently seen the smoke, saw the hand start for the pocket, and in excited anticipation, knew what was coming.

Even the judge broke out in laughter. The clerk of the court came in grinning and informed the court that the "burning" attorney had to leave to obtain a new suit and requested that the judge adjourn until the next day. Still laughing, the court did so. This seems to have been the hottest case in DeKalb County Court records - for that lawyer, anyway.

SHERIFF HAD NO JAIL IN 1839;
NO ESCAPES THOUGH

Everyone will smile over this story of law enforcement in the Sycamore area. It was uncovered while digging into the history of this community and nearby areas. It is recorded that the first sheriffs of DeKalb County lived in Sycamore, but had no jail. This was in the period of 1838 to 1840.

Each night the prisoners were taken to an upstairs room of the sheriff's house. He shackled them and then dropped the chain through a hole he had cut in the floor. Upon retiring, he shackled the other end of the chain to himself. Any attempt to escape would have awakened him immediately.

This was penal genius in its earliest form.

HECTIC DAYS IN OUR COUNTY JAIL; HOODLUMS ARRIVE

For many years the DeKalb County jail in Sycamore was not heavily inhabited. If there were 20 prisoners there at one time, it was considered something worthy of extra conversation. But all that was changed with the advent of the 18th amendment, known as the repeal of prohibition. Sheriff E. E. Crawford had the dubious distinction of having the first federal prisoners ever held there.

That period made law enforcement history at the county jail. Beer barons of Chicago's gangland and beer running tribes had loads of money. They spent it lavishly for extra favors while serving time or waiting trial, and there were many of them.

Gangland's Elite

This all came about because the prohibition laws failed so miserably that millions of people were drinking bootleg beer and liquor furnished by that type of people. As a result, federal prisons and Cook County jails quickly filled to overflowing. The federal government then hired, so to speak, use of the outlying county bastiles.

Sycamore officers and local newspapermen became acquainted with hoodlums, beer barons, black & tans, dope fiends, dope runners, and even a few ladies of the world's most ancient "profession."

Probably the most famous and notorious prisoner of Sheriff Crawford's regime was Terry Druggan, who at one time was one of the wealthiest of beer barons, but who finally got caught and was sent to Sycamore to be a "guest" at the county jail. Terry used to give a boy a ten dollar bill to do a simple errand for him in the business district.

Terry and former Sheriff Crawford are gone to their final reward, but it is recalled that after Crawford's term ended, and Terry had settled his slight altercation with the government, the two enjoyed a winter together in Miami. The ex-sheriff came home broke.

Once there was a jail break which caused much excitement and a lot of work and worry. Murray Greenblatt, who was here

serving time on a narcotics charge and had but a short time left for his term, sawed two bars and escaped. He made a rope ladder out of bedclothing. He was never recaptured.

Federal prisoners broke all records for DeKalb County jail population, too. At one time the local prison had 101 prisoners jammed inside.

Lace Curtain Jail

During the term of Sheriff I. W. George another famous prisoner spent considerable time in Sycamore's big iron barred hotel. He was John Jake-The-Barber Factor. He was being held on a charge of some international shenanigans that was supposed to have depleted the British treasury through an alleged \$7,000,000 stock sales scheme. He became one of the most pampered prisoners that ever graced the confines of the jail. He was allowed to go with an officer to the movies, out to the city park, and on auto rides around the county. He was permitted to purchase special meals, have a barber come in to doll him up and in general was treated like a bit of royalty.

It was about this time that the local prison earned the name of the "lace curtain jail." The jail had been criticized by federal inspectors for lack of a sick room cell. Therefore, a cell was painted white, a nice white iron bed was installed, complete with mattress, sheets and pillow cases. A moderately attractive white curtain was hung over the lone window. The cell was intended for sick or injured prisoners. The fancy white curtain gave the Chicago news hawks an opportunity to dub the place the "lace curtain jail."

Communism showed up in the jail among prisoners under Sheriff Crawford's rule. One afternoon, when the sheriff had started down county to serve legal papers, a couple of prison dopes attempted to force a third prisoner to share his money with them. He refused and they proceeded to cut him up with a knife made out of a tin can cover. Crawford happened to return to obtain an official paper he had forgotten and discovered what was going on. He investigated and when he finished with the two knifers, they were not able to write home for several days. All the other prisoners in there at the time, remained quite docile for the balance of their stay.

One of the funniest events in many years of county jail history happened on a Saturday night when a DeKalb bootlegger

of Lithuanian extraction was placed in the bull pen along with a couple of Chinese narcotic addicts. Steve, the bootlegger, was allsteamed up over being arrested and also because the deputies had turned down his bribe offers. In his excitement he lapsed back into his Lithuanian tongue in a raised voice to scream a tale of his woes to the two Chinese. The Chinamen also became excited and both tried to talk in their high sing-song pitch and native tongue at the same time. They, too, had troubles and wanted Steve to know about them. The resulting bedlam had the entire mass of prisoners, the sheriff and his deputies in gales of laughter.

LEAK IN OIL TANK STARTS CHAIN REACTION

In 1931 and 1932 oil was a chief topic of conversation over a wide area in Northern Illinois. Everyone hoped to get rich that way, but few did. Some went bankrupt with the greatest of ease, as did Professor Louis Higley of Wheaton College.

The chemistry professor sought to exploit "oil fields" at the Emmett Phillips barbecue stand located at the "Y" on the former Lincoln Highway near Geneva, Illinois. For many weeks the people spoke of nothing else and newspapers were full of stories concerning the discovery. Great crowds drove out there to view the "booming bonanza."

Great wealth was doomed, however, when it was found that the "oil well" was nothing more than the seepage from a nearby underground leaky oil tank. In the meantime, the professor had sunk \$15,000 into a proposed drilling project and was mired in a dandy mess of court trouble.

Oil Near Sycamore ?

Along about the same time an Oak Park group formed a corporation and sought oil on the Wyman farm north of Lovell's Crossing, near Sycamore.

Actual drilling took place there over a five year period. By the end of 1932 it was reported that \$35,000 had been spent. According to all surveys and geological explanations it was honestly thought that there really was oil down there. The project came to a halt, though, when both money and oil failed to show up.

SMALL BOY TELLS SHERIFF
TO GO TO WORK LIKE DADDY

Newell Jennings, youngest son of Dr. and Mrs. Howard L. Jennings of Sycamore, might make an excellent first sergeant. That was indicated when he invaded the county jail one day several years ago. He was between 3 and 4 years old at the time.

He barged in, took a long, hard look at the sheriff and several deputies who were engaged in a conference. The boy didn't approve, so he barked, "Why don't you fellows go to work? My daddy has to work."

The county gendarmes were rendered speechless. They promptly disbanded and headed for squad cars and WORK.

The little sergeant was made happy, and wended his way back home.

POST OFFICE IS SCENE OF "BOOM"
ONE NIGHT IN '29

There was a supercolossal explosion that rattled windows and awakened a few neighbors near the Sycamore post office in the wee small hours of the night of December 14, 1929. They wondered what kind of mail was coming in at that horrible hour and why so much noise.

When dawn came they learned all about it. Yeggs had gone to a great deal of effort to blow the vault door. Something happened to frighten them away, however, and they failed to obtain any loot.

Oh, well, look at all the exercise they gained.



This is the old Sycamore Universalist Church that is no longer a part of the local church scene. The main portion of the structure served as a nucleus around which was built the Community Center building.

The members of the Universalist faith joined with the Congregationalists to form what is known today as the Federated Church of Sycamore.

COMMUNITY CENTER IMPORTANT BUT HAS MONEY PROBLEMS

The Sycamore Community Center has been the scene of most of the local theatrical, musical and ceremonial entertainments or celebrations for 32 years. Those who have made their homes in this area in recent years may not know that the center was built around the abandoned Universalist church.

For many years a church with normal steeple and bell was the scene of regular services and served the spiritual comforts for those of that faith there. One of its more prominent, wealthy and beloved members was the late Mrs. Mary Stevens. Upon her death, her will disclosed that she left a sum of money for the purpose of building a new church.

New Church Formed

Along in the mid 20's it was noted that the congregation had dwindled both in numbers and in financial strength. It was quite apparent that the church could not survive and certainly there couldn't be any thought of building a new one.

All kinds of suggestions were made as to what could be done. Finally, the congregation voted to merge with the much stronger Congregational Church. The Federated Church was the result of the merger.

It was also agreed, among those more directly concerned, that the city would be best served if it had a community center. By going to court, the will was broken and the money intended for a new church was legally diverted so that the old church could be rebuilt and used for this purpose. The Center was opened for public enjoyment in 1928.

Experience and time have wrought many changes in the center. The two-alley bowling department long ago faded away as the sport became universally popular. Commercial alleys of greater size and better equipment attracted the ever growing numbers that follow the sport.

An indoor swimming pool, part of the center when it was first opened, has been filled in and floored over because off-season swimming did not prove popular or economical.

All the way down through the past 32 years, finances have

been a constant worry. Time and again the threat of permanent closing has bobbed up. A small amount of tax money helps. Donations are a major help and some fees manage to tide the enterprise over.

The manager of the place is like a father with a big, old house, a large family, and a small income. No solution has ever been found that enables the governing board to heave a sigh of relief.

WERE OUR 1929 GIRLS TOO HEAVY?
READ THE PROOF

It was New Year's Eve, 1929, and a great ball was in progress at the Fargo Hotel here. Much excitement ensued when a group of about a dozen young ladies became stranded in the hotel elevator, and it wasn't caused by a lack of funds, either. It was a case of too much weight!. We wonder if that gave rise to all this reducing craze?

The gals were on their way down from the second floor when midway between the two floors the car quit like a balky old mule. Noise from the ballroom prevented anyone from hearing the wails of distress from the descending "angels".

When it was discovered that other would-be passengers were unable to call the elevator, an urgent call for help was relayed to the management. Ed, Swanson, Sycamore electrician, was summoned but, even with his skill, the spunky car wouldn't budge.

It became necessary for mechanics to remove the top of the car and place a ladder down into it, permitting the frightened femmes to climb out. It was learned afterward that the car was overloaded causing it to stop automatically.

FALLS OFF SHOVEL TO PUT SYCAMORE INTO NATION'S HEADLINES

The election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the presidency of the United States in the 30's led to a tremendous economic upheaval in the nation, the effects of which may never end. One of the bureaus set up under his regime was the WPA. It was created to help pull Uncle Sam out of the worst depression in history. WPA became a Republican political issue and, as a result, the injury of a laborer in Sycamore was spread into headlines from coast to coast and from palm to pine.

For those who were born after WPA lived and died, a little explanation is required. The initials stood for Works Progress Administration. Under it, towns, cities, counties and interstate governing organizations applied to Washington for financial aid for public projects such as new high schools, sidewalks and hospitals. The finances were supposed to go to pay wages to those who would otherwise be unemployed due to the depression.

Gullberg Gets Busy

Because, as in all cases of government spending, no matter what era or nation it involves, there are bound to be mistakes made and government bureaus become political footballs. The GOP charged constantly that WPA was a waste, was mishandled and created a dole which would, as they claimed, make eventual derelicts out of men so employed. Laziness and planned slowness to make jobs last longer were charges also hurled into the political headlines of all campaigns of that time.

In Sycamore WPA funds were used to pay workers who were hired by the contractors building the sewage disposal plant in 1938. One day an employee out there was resting on his shovel. His chin was on his hands over the top of the shovel handle as he leaned on the tool. He fell off, swung his arm out to brace his fall and fractured it in three places.

S. I. Gullberg, otherwise known at various times during his career as "Steve", "Steam", or "Stan", was a diligent and alert reporter for the Sycamore Tribune and was also connected with such major sheets as the Chicago Tribune, Rockford Morning Star and, in special cases such as this one, the United Press. He is a graduate of the University of Illinois, School of Journalism. Today he is a successful merchant, being a partner in the

furniture store of Gullberg and Haines, operating in both Sycamore and Rochelle.

Within minutes after the accident, "Steve" was on the story and not much longer after that he had it on all the news wires. For the next 48 hours headlines all over the nation read something like this, "Well, It Has Finally Happened", or "Sycamore WPA Man Leans Too Long and Falls", or "WPA Worker Falls Off Shovel".

A National Scoop

Later, the news stories were quite enlarged and embellished by many magazines. Canadian and English newspapers also mentioned the story. For Gullberg it was his greatest national scoop.

It stands out as one of four or five great stories to carry national or international interest out of Sycamore. Some of the others were: the coming of John (Jake-The-Barber) Factor to the county jail; when Mrs. Helena Dolder became the first woman sheriff and squelched a prison riot with fire hoses on her first night on the job; and the Maria Ridulph kidnapping and murder in 1957.

FDR DINES AS HE ROLLS THROUGH HERE
ON CGW RR IN 1929

On September 24, 1929, a special train carrying President-to-be Franklin D. Roosevelt passed through Sycamore on the Chicago Great Western RR. He was campaigning, but knowing he was in a long time Republican "fortress" area, he refused to come out

He waved through the window of the diner to a couple of staunch Democrats and a few curious Republicans and that was all. The GOP atmosphere didn't seem to hurt his appetite.

FDR CLOSES ALL BANKS
FOR TWO WEEKS IN MARCH '33

One of the acts for which the then President F. D. Roosevelt was praised, even by Republicans, in 1933, was his bank moratorium. Although it created problems for many people, it helped greatly in restoring the financial equilibrium of the nation at a time when the great depression of the 30's was causing a lot of hardship, worry and even despair.

All banks of the nation remained closed to all business as of the morning of March 4, 1933. They reopened about two weeks later. Sycamore's First Trust and Savings Bank reopened on March 16th.

Vast amounts of credit had to be granted by Sycamore food merchants during this two week period. Employees were not paid during the bank holiday and even if they were they could not have cashed their checks. No loans were made and no deposits were received for the period of the moratorium, but Sycamore people weathered it quite well.

SAILOR FLIRTS AND CAUSES NAVAL BATTLE DOWN TOWN

Those of you who can recall the old Court Theater that was located at the southeast corner of State and Maple Streets down town, may also remember the battle between a six foot sailor and the Sycamore chief of police one summer evening in the 20's. From the standpoint of exertion used on the part of the chief, and the length of time involved, the arrest probably stands out as an all time record for this city.

Early that evening the sailor arrived here from the Great Lakes Naval Training Station. Just how he got here, or why, isn't in the records, but the record does show that he liked the beauty of the galselling tickets in the old movie house and began a wink-smile-and-peek flirtation with her. She became quite upset and notified Mr. Walter Obridge, who then owned and managed the theater. He called the police chief.

The big sailor objected strenuously to the arrest. Words led to action. The action spun to the center of Maple Street where the two cussed, grunted and wrestled for several minutes while spectators gathered and offered "important" but unused advice to both gladiators. Suddenly the chief managed to trip the sailor causing him to sit down rather unceremoniously. The sudden kerplunk broke a bottle of wine the sailor had tucked inside his britches. (Sailor's pants do not have pockets). Loss of the precious beverage had the same effect on our visitor that a can of spinach would have on Popeye.

Chief's Pants Split Open

He arose, hauling the chief up with him, and like a half-back crashing a line, dragged the chief westward. A huge farmer happened along and sarcastically asked if the police department needed any help. By that time the sailor had clamped his arms around a telephone pole. The chief pounded the sailor's head with his billy club, but that didn't seem to have much effect. The farmer grabbed the billy and began pounding the sailor's fingers. With a yelp, he let go and the battle slowly waltzed south on Maple Street until it reached the door of Sycamore's bastille.

There the sailor got his hands planted on the door jams. Once again the assisting farmer pounded his fingers. The chief then had the brilliant idea of catching the visiting battler by the

feet and tipping him inside the clink endwise. Spectators grinned when they heard a R-I-P and also heard the chief gasping, "####&&**!! it, there goes my pants." Finally, with a sound similar to emptying a load of cans into the city truck on clean-up day, the iron gate clanked shut and our "guest" was at long last locked up in the dryer for the night.

Included in the court costs the next day was a sufficient amount to obtain a new pair of pants for Sycamore's weary chief of police.

STRANGE TALES OF GUNS,
GRINS AND NEARBY SAFARIS

We read of many tragic events connected with guns these days. It is refreshing to recall events along memory lane involving guns in which much fun resulted. The incidents below involve a revolver, shotguns and even the old time beebee airgun.

"Luke" McLagan still grimaces at the remembrance of an adventure at old Waterman Hall School for girls. Only this time it did not involve girls.

He, Edward McGibbons, Martin Johnson, Earl Olson and Raymond Dye invaded the back campus of the girl's academy one afternoon for the purpose of obtaining some of the luscious red apples that a couple of trees produced annually.

Luke's Fanny Flames

Things were going well. That is, pockets were being filled nicely but the fruit on the ground was not sufficient, so Luke (brave - Oh, Yeah?) volunteered to climb the tree and shake down a few more apples.

While up in the tree, he failed to notice the school janitor hustling through the back door with shotgun in hand. The other lads saw him, however, and lit out at top speed. When "Luke" saw what was brewing, he dropped from the tree with his legs going like an airplane's propellers. He reached the fence and started over. Just when the seat of his britches were tight and his fanny was a framed target, he heard a BOOM! A blast of rock salt hit him and accelerated his speed far beyond championship time. His fanny felt like it was on fire, and for days afterward his mother kept asking him why he acted so queer around the house. He gritted his teeth and remained silent.

That same year he decided it was high time he had some fun like that. With a beebee gun, and accompanied by one of his friends, he sought prey. On the far south side they spotted a gardener leaning over weeding his radishes. "Luke" aimed. There was the pfft of the airgun, the spat when the beebee hit the gardener's right flank, and a clap as his hand came down over the sting. He whirled toward the direction of the shot and yelled, "Who the h--l done that?" "Luke" was nowhere near enough to answer by that time.

It Got Away

On one occasion Edward Ernest, Loring Hanscom, Earl Olson, Wesley Anderson, Edward McGibbons and "Luke" got together some overnight camping equipment and quite a mess of artillery. They made a safari into the Charter Grove Woods. All but two had shotguns. Olson had a 22 rifle and Hanscom had borrowed a 44 calibre, snub-nosed revolver.

The next morning the hunters spotted a rabbit that dashed under a brush pile but still could be seen.

Hanscom begged to be allowed to have the first shot with his revolver. He crawled up close to the brush stack and let go but was not too accurate with the 44. He had aimed at the rabbit's head. The rabbit zoomed upward through the brush like a guided missile. It seems that Hanscom had nipped off the bunny's tail.

"Luke" fired - WHAM!, with his single barrel, twelve gauge shotgun. That rolled the rabbit over but he came up running. Olson fired his rifle. The rabbit jumped but kept on going. McGibbons fired his 20 gauge, but by that time the bunny was out of sight.

That hardy rabbit was never found. If you see a rabbit (gray haired by this time) without a tail, that's him.

A Rag Rabbit?

Roy Winans and a friend hiked out north on a rabbit hunting expedition one Saturday morning. A ten or twelve mile circuit failed to stir up a single cottontail. Returning almost to Sycamore, along a drainage ditch northwest of the wire mill, a rabbit jumped out right under their feet.

Winans fired his shotgun from the hip. He quickly climbed the fence and sped into the cornfield for another shot. A few minutes later laughter was heard. He had hit the rabbit with a full load of shot at a very close range. When his friend reached him, he had the rabbit draped over the end of the gun barrel. The poor bunny was so full of shot and so broken up that he hung like a wet dish rag. Both fellows laughed all the way home. Roy said he had a notion to try to sell it for the weight of the lead that was in it. Some junk dealer might take it, he thought.

Oh, No!

Raymond Russ and "Luke" McLagan had but one double barreled shotgun between 'em one Saturday morning. They hiked all the way out to the Lanegran farm on the Coltonville Road, and back to Sycamore without seeing a trace of a rabbit.

During their long journey, they had taken turns at carrying the gun. As they neared the northern edge of the city limits, it was Russ's turn to tote the weapon. All of a sudden two rabbits jumped out in front of them and sped away. Russ pulled both triggers at the same time. Nothing happened. "Luke" and Ray had forgotten to load the blamed gun.

CHANDLER'S CIGAR PLANT
PAID ITS EMPLOYEES
IN BEAUTIFUL GOLD



This photo is of the Chandler Cigar Store and factory on east State Street where the Newman building is now located. It was taken in the early 1900's. Mr. E. C. Chandler, the owner, is the gentleman in the center with the dark suit and derby hat, and the young man on the extreme right is his son Cal. Another son, Zach, was attending the University of Illinois at the time the picture was taken. Because others in the picture were short term cigar makers who came and went rather frequently, no further identifications could be made.

There was a time in Sycamore, and over wider areas of the midwest, when cigars made here were very well known and well liked. It was along in 1890 that Mr. Chandler moved to this city and opened his factory.

He started his factory with three or four employees and at the peak of operations in the early 1900's, he had over forty people on his payroll. That payroll has the unique distinction

of being the only one in Sycamore history in which employees were always paid entirely in gold.

Cigars, of course, are not smoked as much now as they were in those days, but old timers here can remember the several different brands Chandler advertised. Some of them were: Belle of Sycamore, Cuban Rays, La Reflection and Stockyards Zephyrs.

Tobacco was bought in huge bales and, with large cases of cigar boxes, was stacked in the factory warehouse. A local sales staff, in addition to his sales organization in Chicago, created considerable business for a number of years.

War Hurt Business

World War I created the first change in American smoking habits to occur in over a century. Soldiers liked cigarettes because they were so much easier to carry and handle in combat and training areas. That spelled the beginning of the end for the Chandler cigar plant.

Little by little he began selling his property holdings in Sycamore and planned on moving to California in 1920. His wife died that year and his plans were changed, but a year or two later, however, he did move to Alhambra, California, where he spent the rest of his life.

Chess and Checkers

Nothing like Chandler's cigar store exists here today and many is the old timer who wishes it were still here. A raised platform, surrounded by a brass grating or fence, set the office off from the store. A space back of that area, near the big old stove, and in view of the cigar counter on the west wall, was devoted to the then important activity of chess and checkers.

Eric Nicolet, an avid fan remembers it well. Others besides Mr. Chandler, who liked an evening of chess and checkers, were: George Morris, David Middleton, Charles McDonough, Frank Poust, Roy Waterman, Dave Rykert, Roy Wakefield of Waterman, Floyd Brower, Dr. Brown, Dr. Maynard, and Dr. Trigger.

The store also brings to mind the Chandler boys, Cal and Zach. Zach was bookkeeper and clerk in his father's store and

factory for many years. He also was an accomplished piano player and at one time had his own traveling orchestra. He was a witty, frail-built and good natured chap. He had a limp due to an injury received during a hazing while being initiated into a fraternity at the university.

Even though he could take on a bigger load of champagne than anyone of his day and age, he was always on time at the office next morning, fresh as a daisy. The fact is, one could never tell whether or not Zach had been drinking; his manners were excellent at all times.

His brother, Cal, was what was commonly known in those days as a daredevil. Of course, he owned a motorcycle. On one quiet summer afternoon he spent almost an hour zooming up the hill on South California from Elm to High Street. Reaching the north crosswalk at High Street, he tried to jump his cycle from that walk, through the air about 40 feet, and land safely on the other crosswalk - sans wings.

While that was in progress, neighbors and a rapidly growing crowd of other fascinated spectators, began to gather along the block. Several became alarmed and notified authorities. Before the police arrived, young Chandler has succeeded in "flying" across the top of the hill and was satisfied. He sped away to seek out further adventures.

Thrills Passengers

On one occasion Cal had someone riding with him on the cycle toward DeKalb. The turn at the Electric Park corner, a half mile west of town, was rather sharp. In racing with other cyclists that afternoon, the passenger swore that Chandler had to remove one hand from the steering handle in order to get between two telephone poles that stood close together at the park corner. His idea was to cut the corner and win the race.

He offered to take a Sycamore man on a business trip to Belvidere one day. Upon arriving at the Boone County city, the passenger decided, very definitely, that he would much rather take the C&NW train back home the next day. Cycle riding with Cal Ghandler was far too nerve shattering for him.

On a bet one night, Cal and two other young fellows whose names are lost to memory, drove through Sycamore's business district in a car in their birthday suits. That stunt cost them

some time in jail, plus a fine. It also caused the good ladies of our town to gather in groups all over the city to verbally chastise "such goings on." Yet, today, that event brings a laugh when it is recalled that the boys argued in court that no harm was done as they said, "We didn't stand up!"

Loses Sweetheart

Cal took his girl friend for an auto ride one night. In an apparent attempt to show off his bravado, he chose to drive his car backward at high speed all the way into Sycamore from Electric Park. It frightened her so badly that a doctor had to be called. As a result of the wild ride, Cal had to seek out a new sweetheart.

CRIME WAVE ENDS
IN FINES AND LAUGHTER
WHEN ABE RELENTED

Crime has never been too serious a problem in Sycamore. One or two murders, and a daylight post office robbery are the only major acts of banditry in the city's first century. In fact, some of the crime record has an occasional touch of humor. We recall the case of our good friend, the late Abe Levine.

Abe was quite a character; honest, charitable and with a keen sense of humor. Everyone liked him. He was in the same business and at the same location as the present well-liked citizen, Morris Mabel.

One summer Abe thought he was enjoying a boom in the waste paper business. The nice thing about it was that the paper he was buying was already baled. For a period of time he pondered over the strange fact that the young men from whom he was buying seemed actually pleased with the low prices he was paying. And, of course, he was also pleased as he dreamed of the neat profit he soon would be gathering.

That's Strange

Then one day he noticed that, although he had been buying baled paper for weeks, there didn't seem to be much of an accumulation in the warehouse. He asked members of his crew if they had shipped any away that they might have forgotten to mention to him. Their answer rather startled him. They said, "No, Mr. Levine, There hasn't been enough stacked in there at any time to make up a carload."

It suddenly dawned on him that he was the victim of mean and foul play. He sought the aid of the local "Scotland Yard" who very shortly trapped several boys in the act. They readily admitted that they had been stealing a bale of paper now and then from Abe's warehouse and later coming around in daytime to sell it back to him.

Even then Abe didn't want the boys to remain in jail. He made arrangements with them for some compensation, and only small fines resulted. Thus ended the crime wave of that otherwise quiet summer here.

OUR GUARDSMEN OF SYCAMORE HAD FUN AT OLD CAMP GRANT

From 1922 to the spring of 1941, Regimental Headquarters Co., 129th Regiment, 65th Brigade, 33rd Division, was an interesting military organization in Sycamore. Captain William Joslyn was its first commander and Captain John F. Carlson was its last peace time commander prior to World War II.

As mentioned previously, its armory was in the old Townsend livery stable, which today houses the advertising department of the DeKalb Agricultural Association, Inc. The summer camp for guardsmen was held at Camp Grant near Rockford.

Sycamore's guardsmen of that day, now either in their last long rest or too old for further military service, recall many humorous episodes of the annual summer field training period.

Harris Fights - Sleeps

At one time the unit went in heavily for athletics and acquired the services of one "Kid" Harris, a boxer. He became a privileged soldier in the outfit and thought he earned it by winning the regimental boxing tournament.

One morning at reveille, the then commanding Captain, Charles B. Townsend, came sternly before the "long kahki line" and stood in front of Corporal James W. Cliffe, who was the man in charge of tent number 5.

Sharply the captain addressed him, "Corporal Cliffe, what is all that junk on a cot in your tent? Don't you, as a corporal, know that your tent is supposed to be in good shape when you fall in for reveille?"

"Sir," answered Cliffe, in his best military pose, "That isn't junk. That's Harris!"

It seems that Harris had the idea that he could sleep late as one of his privileges, so he had curled up under his blankets so the skipper wouldn't see him.

The Perfect Clock

The word sleep brings to mind the story of one of the men whose name has been lost, but about whom a laughable incident

is remembered to this day. He was a sound sleeper; very hard to awaken for reveille.

One night the outfit placed his cot across the tent doorway so that he could be more swiftly and easily reached to "work over" at dawn, and thereby get to roll call on time.

Other guardsmen coming home late that night were disconcerted at finding their doorway blocked. They gave the situation deep, philosophical contemplation and came up with a real brilliant idea; they'd let the sun's rays wake the lad at dawn.

So they picked up the cot and sleeping soldier, bribed the guard on duty, and headed south, having all the aspects of a night burial party. All were quiet and solemn. When dawn came the aforesaid sleeping soldier awakened to find that he and his cot were a half mile from the company street - right in the center of the vast cantonment parade ground.- all alone.

Another interesting character was Sergeant C. J. Bauer who appeared in this area suddenly after World War I, spent a short time here, enlisted in Headquarters Company, and in no time at all talked himself up to three stripes and sergeant rank with his stories of combat activities in Europe. No one knows where he is today.

Part of the training of every guardsman is the teaching of ability to get through enemy lines. One way to teach it is to have all soldiers in camp and in bed by the time "Taps" is sounded. Any soldiers coming in late had to find ways and means of sneaking back into their own company without being caught.

Sergeant Bauer came in late one night and noted that a rookie was on night guard duty. When the guard snapped, "Halt, who goes there?", Bauer answered, "Oh never mind. I haven't been around here very long so you wouldn't know me anyway."

Before the rookie could gather his wits, Bauer dashed by him and, of course, he never knew who he was so he couldn't turn him in.

Hot Seat Initiation

As part of an initiation one year, the soundly sleeping Private Lawrence (Dooney) Rogers was carried, cot and all, down to the horse corral (yeah, we had horses then) and gently

placed behind the horses. He found himself a little bit more horsey for wear when reveille sounded in the morning.

Because he was late for roll call, the outfit decided that he merited further initiation so they stripped him that night and hailed him before the court. He was found guilty of almost everything in the "big book." He was sentenced to go down to the corral, pick up a hunk of fresh, soft horse manure in each hand, and bring it back undamaged.

Upon returning he was ordered to "SIT DOWN!" He did, but instantly he leaped into the air, screeched, and in the excitement most thoroughly squeezed the two hunks of manure he had in his hands. The court had wired the chair to a hand powered magnet and just as Rogers sat down, they gave it a jolt of a few volts. Being in his birthday suit, it hit him hard.

Violin Amid Flood

In the early 20's the drainage system had not been properly renovated at Camp Grant. The result was that one morning after a torrential rain, Headquarters Company street was under water. The entire outfit was called on to do some spade and shovel work.

Wearily, but slowly succeeding in their major task, they were greatly puzzled to hear what sounded like music coming from one of their tents. As one man they moved in and found Private Russell (Paddy) Masterson sitting on his own cot, his feet up out of the water on the edge of his buddy's cot, blithely playing his violin!

The soldiers promptly confiscated the instrument, picked up Paddy and tossed him bodily into the nearest puddle. He got a full day's work out, too.

Private P. E. Saunders, a former student at St. Albans school and now a permanent resident of Sycamore, was a good soldier, but he had his troubles while learning. On two occasions that are memorable to the old timers of Headquarters Co., Saunders contributed much to the laughter and comment of his fellow soldiers. On both occasions he was on duty at the message center.

On the first one he had a message for the commander of the 130th regiment. On learning the location of the officer he

was seeking, he marched over there, saluted smartly, presented the message and got the officer's signature.

In the army one comes to attention, salutes, and does an about face when leaving a commissioned officer. Saunders did everything right until he attempted the about face. At that moment he discovered to his horror that he was squaring about with a tight tent rope between his legs. His body went out of military posture; his arms flew upward for balance, and with a gasp and a ker-plunk, down he went. Officers and men about the scene had a big laugh, but for Saunders it wasn't funny at all.

Over The Handlebars

His second adventure took place on a foggy night after a heavy rain. This time he was using a bicycle to deliver his message. While he was trying to hurry, smoke a pipe and see through the dense fog, his bike hit a submerged rock and Saunders flew over the handlebars into a large puddle, at the same time losing his pipe and tobacco.

After getting a relief man to deliver the message, he dripped over to his company street to change his uniform, take a bath and fix the bicycle. All this time he was sputtering a steady stream of accusations aimed at the army. When he finished his lengthy tirade full of sulphurous verbs, adjectives and other colorful phraseology, calm again descended over the 33rd division.

Always in military or naval service there is rain; big rains, little rains and sprinkles. All of them cause trouble, but a big rain in 1933 or 1934 brought forth one of the funniest scenes the company men can recall. It was the year that the entire division was taken by rail from Rockford to Chicago, where it paraded through the World's Fair, "A Century of Progress."

The outfit broke camp the night before; that means that they took down their big tents and slept in pup tents for the night. Some, like the perennially chilled Sergeant "Luke", hid in the shower building and slept comfy, curled up on a bench behind the little heater that was used to furnish hot water for showers.

Two of the soldiers in the Sycamore group decided not to bother with pup tents. To heck with all that trouble of rolling packs in the morning. They voted to sleep under the stars. All was fine until the early hours of the morning when storm clouds rolled in and a terrific rain descended.

Noses Like Snorkels

The two were very sound sleepers. There, by the dawn's early light, officers and men of the company gathered to view the "corpses." They had slept in a hollow that had filled with water so that they were completely under water except for nose and mouth. No blankets, no tents - nothing. Their noses were up in the air like two modern day submarine snorkels.

As a result of their experience, they were two very busy soldiers trying to find dry uniforms in time to march to the train for Chicago or be left behind at Camp Grant - maybe until next summer.

No story of guardsmen would be complete without telling about Private John Adams of Clare. He was a tall, witty, good natured and husky lad who never cared too much for soldiering. He never got to be a corporal, but in the six years he served with the unit he grew to be one of the best liked of all the members. This was true of men and officers alike.

There was one time when he had been out too late at night and decided to get lost come drill time the next morning. He was discovered later, snoozing peacefully, amid some tall grass that bordered the camp area. A couple of sergeants awakened him. As he came to, and suffering no doubt from the effects of the night before, a fly crawled across his nose causing him to remark, "Sergeant, why don't the guards send them darn house flies back to town. They've no business out here in the country bothering me!"

Then came the famous tent job that put even the hardboiled Colonel Diller S. Myers in stitches. Adams was told to take a detail of men and a full size pyrambula tent over to the Regimental Headquarters area and set it up for use as a message center personnel tent.

What Adams didn't realize was that he and his men had been given the wrong center pole for the tent; it was too long. Ordinarily such a job requires only a few minutes, but hours went by and John and his detail failed to return.

Sergeant Lossman Worries

In the late afternoon First Sergeant Bill Lossman decided to investigate. About the time he arrived at the erection site,

the big gun down at division headquarters sounded off, indicating that it was time to lower the flag and start sundown parades. As the cannon sound jabbed the air of the quiet summer afternoon, Adams was heard to say, "Gosh, the sun goes down with a bang around here, don't it?"

And Sergeant Lossman rumbled, "Yeah, but it goes down faster than you can put up a tent. What the heck is the matter? You could have set up Ringling Brothers circus while you were doing this little trick."

Even Governor Laughed

Then Adams started in, "Y'uh see, sarge, every time we got this blasted tent up one of its sides caved in. We tried everything. Right now we have figured out that the center pole was made too long so we dug a hole and let it down, but we got the hole too deep, so we gotta take the tent down again and put a rock in the hole to raise the pole"

When Lossman could get his breath, which he had lost while trying to keep from laughing in the presence of most of the regimental staff, he said, "Adams, go get the RIGHT pole - the one you should have brought over here in the first place and get this tent up before evening mess or you'll go hungry." The tent was up in twenty minutes.

The story gained enough prestige to be told at the officer's banquet held in honor of the Governor on the Sunday of Visitor's Day that year. The Governor of Illinois and visiting Generals were highly amused.

Another memory that brings smiles to old time guardsmen, and no doubt will cause many a war veteran to smile, was the night a pair of rookies were induced to carry a load of bricks over much of two regimental areas. They were supposed to be hunting the finance officer to turn the payroll over to him. They thought that what they were carrying was a metal case full of money.

Beeg Steenk

Oh, yes, there was also the night of the Beeg Steenk. The sergeants had themselves a real humdinger of a party, but after so long a period Sergeant "Luke" became tired and decided to crawl into his blankets. He did so and promptly went to sleep.

A couple of other sergeants didn't like that so they obtained a bottle of evil smelling stuff that had wonderful lasting qualities. They had intended to tip just a few droplets on "Luke", but somebody shoved the sergeant's arm and about a third of the bottle spilled all over the cot.

As a result all the sergeants except "Luke" had to move out, and even the next day they kept a respectable distance away from him. The chaplain visited him and wanted to know, "Luke aren't you well?" During the day the stinking sergeant found some new blankets and sent all of his own to Rockford to the laundry. The laundry charged extra but when they failed to remove all the aroma, "Luke" refused to pay the bill. Several days later the sergeants moved back into the tent but claimed it wasn't like it used to be.

Saw Big Fight

Not funny, but good, was the fact that corporals and sergeants and many others of the outfit got to see the famous "long count" Dempsey-Tunney fight in Soldiers Field. Some politician had conceived the idea of using the Illinois National Guard as ushers at the fight.

For a few of the Sycamore soldiers it proved exceptionally good. The car in which they rode to Chicago was a slow one and they were late in arriving. By that time all the regular ushering jobs were filled so the late ones were given arm bands marked "special." No one ever found anything for the specials to do.

They took places in the aisles of the \$20 seat section and as the preliminary fights wore on they gradually moved further down. By the time the main event was ready to start, the Sycamore boys were down in the \$40 section - along with such elite as the Governor of Illinois, divisional staff officers, Mayor Bill Thompson of Chicago, etc. It was almost ringside for the half dozen specials - a great night in their memories.

FRIDAY NITE CLUB
INAUGURATED SOME STUPENDOUS PARTIES

Penny ante and good fellowship were themes of the Friday Nite Club, a Sycamore organization of the 1930's. It had several homes during its years of existence. It was first established in the former cloak and hat checkroom on the top floor of the Pierce Block, just off the one time Pierce Hall where dances were enjoyed in past years.

Ping pong, penny ante and pocket billiards were greatly enjoyed, along with conversation of all sorts. There was a radio too. It is recalled that "Luke's" hearing aid was not as modern as the one he has now and he liked to have the radio fairly screaming. On the other hand, the late Albert Nachtigall had a very keen sense of hearing and the blare was too much for him. The result was a permanent feud between the two, which never came to blows or gunfire, but created frequent verbal barrages of stout caliber.

Clubmen Very Busy

The first time the idea of a snack hit the members, "Luke" was permitted to make the coffee. He was never asked to do it again. The members voted that his coffee might be successfully used to remove the rust from an aged water pipe, but as a soothing beverage - NO!

Clarence Duncan, now living in Omaha, Nebraska, missed a step leaving the club one night and fell all the way down in a rolling flight to the first landing. Hearing the rumble, the entire membership on hand dashed to the scene fearing he had been hurt. They were greatly relieved to see him struggling to his feet.

"Randy" Langlois, looking down at him from the top of the stairs, inquired, "Whatcha doing Dunc, saying your prayers?" "Aw, shuddup", was the answer. He limped on down and went home and wasn't seen in the club for several days and nights. He said he wasn't able to get up those blankety blank stairs.

The club lost its Pierce Block location and chose a spot over what is now Bergie's tavern. A telephone was installed so that the young blades could call their dates. The club was the starting point for all kinds of enjoyable expeditions.

FAMOUS NEW YEARS EVE

It was from this headquarters that one of the most famous of all New Years Eve parties was planned. "Luke" rented a cottage along the Fox River between St. Charles and Geneva for the event. It was a bitter cold night. A wee stove was supposed to keep the place warm but didn't do a very good job. One of the characters, Chuck Davis, in an attempt to warm things up, built a camp fire on the front porch. The mother of the landlord saw the smoke and flames and called the Geneva Fire Department.

Shortly before midnight the gang directed one of the members to go to Sam's place nearby and obtain coffee and sandwiches. Meanwhile the remaining members discovered a stack of mattresses stored in an unused room in the place. They proceeded to haul 'em out and lay them over the floor and on edge along the walls. A series of wrestling matches was started, but ended almost before they had begun when L. A. Jessen rolled over, missed the mattress and struck his watch against the wall. The watch exploded into a thousand pieces.

"Luke" had brought along some dago bombs he had acquired from some retailer who had them left over from a Fourth of July observance. At 3:00 A. M., when things had quieted down a bit, he slipped outside and set them off. The detonations were extra loud on the clear, cold night air. It not only scared some of the members, but Sam, the owner of the cottage, and his brother rushed in, one at the back and one at the front door, each carrying a sawed-off shotgun. They thought there was a gun battle under way.

When dawn came, the place looked like a disorganized madhouse. It required an hour for everyone to find coats, hats, etc. "Luke" couldn't find his vest. Chuck had decided to take a nap and had removed his shoes. His feet got cold so he had wrapped them in the missing vest.

Expensive Party

In addition to the rental, Sam charged \$16 for damages. That was a lot of money in the 30's. Sam added that the next time anyone from Sycamore planned a New Years Eve party, he hoped they would look for a cabin in the center of Texas.

The last year of the Friday Nite Club was conducted from

rooms over what is now Birkner's Appliance store. It was a meat market at that time. It was here that a member's birthday was celebrated with a pony of beer. United States was still supposed to be dry so it was necessary to have a deputy sheriff bring in the pony of beer. That was the night "Luke" became so engrossed in a story book that he continued to read while the party raged on around him.

Just A Pleasant Memory

The club had taken its name from its constitutional business session nights. Business usually consisted of a lot of discussion about the failure of the members to pay their dues. The dues finally got so far behind that the rent went unpaid for several months. "Luke" was the last of the Mohicans and proceeded to sell the furniture, pay the rent, and disband the club for good.

Times have changed. Young men now join either one or both of the Elks or Veterans Organizations. Today's groups have much better clubhouses and more elaborate programs, but the Friday Nite Club adventures bring nostalgic smiles as its members look through their bifocals down memory lane.

NEARBY NORTH WOODS
AND SWIMMIN' HOLES
PROVIDED GRAND FUN

The old North Woods and the two swimmin' holes in the near vicinity are bright spots to be seen when we rub our eyes, misty with nostalgia, and take another look down memory lane.

There was a time, of course, when all was forest land north of Sycamore; in the early 1900's it can be recalled that the entire area along the north banks of the Kishwaukee, and for miles eastward, was wooded land.

One swimming spot was under the north bridge of the old Sycamore-Genoa road. The other, Sabin's bridge, was on farm property about a mile east of there.

On warm afternoons in May or early June, if any youngsters were missing from school, it was as certain as sunset that they were either enjoying a bit of wanderlust in the North Woods or were diving and splashing in one of the two swimming areas. The mere fact that the water in the Kishwaukee had some dirt in it failed to bother the hardy kids of those days.

Dam Made Deep Hole

When the day came that the kids wanted to deepen the hole at the North Bridge, they proceeded to build their own dam. 20 lads worked hard for several days toting rocks and other debris to build it just inside the shaded area under the east edge of the bridge.

For about a week or ten days the kids had a grand time in the deeper hole, but a nearly fatal accident stirred up a hornets nest and the boys lost their dam. They were real sad to see it go.

Lewis Keenan, then about 18 years of age, skipped high school classes one warm afternoon and, with some younger boys, was enjoying the cool waters. Someone dared Keenan, who was always ready to accept a challenge, to dice off the bridge railing.

Bloody Dive

He took the dare at once, but failed to dive outward far enough and in going down his left thigh struck a large spike that

protruded from the bridge floor. It tore a huge wound in the leg, tipped him over and landed him sideways in the water with a terrific and bloody splash. He was in the hospital for some time after.

That stopped all swimming for a week. It also informed authorities of the presence of the dam; they were glad to learn about it as farmers had been complaining that the Kishwaukee east and south of Sycamore had too much water, while farmers west of the city were complaining that their cattle did not have enough to drink.

As it turned out, it was found that the dam was illegal and would have to be removed. After that the old swimmin' hole was real deep only during the spring thaws and heavy rains. It was great fun after a rainy spell, when the little creek became quite a river, to swim with the current for miles - even though it meant a long walk back.

That Wonderful Woods

Out there in the quiet of the old North Woods, many a Sycamore boy learned to use his 22 caliber rifle while he hunted chipmunks, rabbits, squirrels, racoons and crows.

Teachers and parents, too, enjoyed the woods as a place to take small children, especially girls, to see and pick wild flowers. Many a family picnic was held there and many an overnight camp was set up, complete with camp fire and a pan of bacon.

Sure, there was fishin', too. Not many big ones were caught, but it was fun just being there with a pole, hook, worm and line. Carp were the big ones, while bullheads were the best for home eating in those days.

Today people own boats and travel far away to sail, fish and swim. Sycamore has a pool in the community park and to swim in the Kishwaukee is considered unsanitary. The wind sighs gloomily through the very few big elms that remain in the North Woods. Perhaps today's kind of fun is healthier, but we doubt very much if the small boy of 1960 is as much thrilled as we were when we played hookey to splash in the old swimmin' hole or to hunt in the old woods.

STORY IS WEIRD ONE
AS "DEAD MEN" SURVIVE

That drunks can survive a great deal of roughness is a common belief. This was born out in vivid fashion one morning some years ago on the north edge of town.

A truck driver guided his big vehicle out of a driveway at the end of north Main Street one morning in a dense fog. He failed to see two men who were apparently walking home from some place north of the city after an all night firewater celebration.

The two wobbly merry-makers also failed to note the truck. The truck ran into the two men much to the horror and nerve-wrecking fear of the driver. He halted his vehicle immediately and hurriedly climbed out, dreading the awful sight he was about to face.

To his amazement, and almost disbelief, the two drunks were struggling to their feet. Swearing at the driver with ever mounting heat, and waving their fists, they headed for him.

He surmised that a fight was brewing so hastily climbed back into the cab and, without further ado, stepped on the gas and drove away. In a local speakeasy a couple of Saturday nights later, there was a terrific argument and a threatened battle between the two "victims" and the driver. They gave him a verbal lashing for being such a careless driver, but nothing more serious developed.

Fiction - But Good

The following did not occur in Sycamore, but the writer is reminded of it by the story above.

A teacher wished to vividly demonstrate the evils of liquor to a class of grade school children. She placed a glass of water and a glass of whiskey on her desk in full view of the class.

She had acquired two night crawlers. One worm was dropped into the water. He wriggled about at a great rate, seemed to enjoy the swim, and lived.

The other worm was placed in the whiskey. With one last mighty wriggle it died and sank heavily to the bottom of the glass.

The children were a bit awed and sat quietly.

The teacher then asked, "Children, what does that mean to you?"

A boy in the back row raised his hand and was given the floor. "Please, teacher", he said, "It means that guys what drink whiskey will never have worms."

LAUGHTER ECHOES
DOWN THE LANES OF OUR MEMORIES

Things that people do and say that are both laughable and lovable, help to create the personality of a small town. Looking back down memory lane, we see again for example, Charles Cooper, red haired young man from Mobile, Alabama. Known as "Red" or "Shorty", he came here to work at E. G. Cooper's oil station down town.

He was not related to the Sycamore oil dealer. He arrived here largely through the persuasion of the long time Sycamore resident and business man. When the latter was vacationing in the south and met young Cooper, he took a liking to him and invited him to come up here to live.

Sycamore young people became very friendly with the newcomer. His southern accent was an intriguing rarity in those days. Several downright funny incidents that involved young Cooper are recalled.

He was living here during the time of the prohibition era. On a New Year's Eve, at a ball held in the Fargo Hotel, he was dancing with the hotel owner's wife. The room was warm, and "Shorty" was quite an active dancer. The hip flask was as common as a necktie in that era and, it being New Year's Eve, he had the spirits of the occasion bobbing in his rear pocket.

Suddenly there was a loud pop accompanied by a horrendous aroma of that famous and powerful stuff known as prohibition liquor. With his face fiery red, Cooper rushed away and headed for his lodging to change clothing. Even the orchestra joined the crowd in laughter.

And there was the night in Fred Britton's billiard hall when Cooper, who had been absorbing some of the prohibition joy juice again, was waxing quite oratorical about his former life in the south.

Nice Dive

He got around to telling about sailing in the gulf of Mexico. That included swimming and led to a discussion of diving. "Red", eager to demonstrate, suddenly headed for the back door, saying something about showing his audience how diving was done off boats down south.

Several friends followed him wondering what he had in mind. Just as they reached the back door they saw him sail off the back porch in a beautiful dive that ended with a crash and grunt in the rubbish barrel.

No serious injury resulted, but his face and shoulder required several white patches where they had been bashed and scratched by the sides of the barrel and the discarded tin cans.

Carl "Red" Burke is considered today, even as he was then, a rather quiet type; intelligent and with a keen sense of humor. Many of his pals still laugh over the episode of the late 20's in which he completely befuddled the traffic detail of Sycamore's "Scotland Yard."

Quite A Transaction

He had bought a 1920 Ford, of brilliant hue, from Leland Strombom, now Industrial Arts instructor at the Sycamore High School. The sale was consummated, without the aid of a lawyer, for the awe inspiring sum of \$22.

Burke was then employed on a farm near Kirkland. The late Charles Adee was on motorcycle traffic and police chief duty here at the same time. Adee noticed that "Red" had no state license plates and warned him several times to obtain one or suffer the consequences.

After a third warning, Adee spotted him still without the plates and gave chase. Burke made his escape somehow, but even then failed to get the pesky license.

On the following Saturday night Carl had a date in Sycamore but was desperately worried about getting in and out of town without getting picked up by the officer. While doing his chores one morning, he spotted a large can of black paint in the barn, and an idea was born. He went to work at once with his brush and repainted the entire Ford black.

He was mighty proud that Saturday night as he sailed past Adee without being recognized. He enjoyed his date; the day was saved. He finally gave in, though, and obtained a license.

House Afire? That All?

A couple of incidents come to mind when we think of James

"Oldy" Oldham. Big, full of fun, a good football player and a former cadet at an Arizona military school, he made friends rapidly in Sycamore.

Dating and dancing on Friday nights were one of his joys. That meant that he enjoyed sleeping late Saturday mornings. The family resided on north Main Street.

One Saturday morning about 9:45, when he was doing some of his best slumber duty, his younger brother burst into his room and yelled, "Fire!" Shaking big "Oldy" with all his strength, he finally aroused him a little.

"Huh?", was the sleepy man's first inquiry. "Fire, you say? Where? Here?" He rolled over, mumbling, "It's okay, the fire boys will be here after a while and take care of everything."

Sure enough, the firemen came, climbed all over the roof, made a lot of noise, but Oldham slept right through until his usual Saturday hour of arising - noon.

His Best Suit, Too

Then there was an early evening mishap in which he figured on a New Year's Eve. Again it is an incident of the prohibition time. This occurred in the old Seeaney Inn, then operated by the late P.M. "Spike" Johnson, famous for his high-powered home brew.

Oldham decided he wanted something stronger as an introductory item for the evening so he bought a bottle of ginger ale, spiked it with raw alcohol, recapped it and, to mix it, began shaking it violently.

He was quietly talking all this time. Suddenly there was a mighty explosion. The liquid dynamite had starting working and, needing more room, had burst the bottle. The result - Oldham wore his second best suit to the dance. His good one smelled like a tropical distillery on a sultry day.

Firemen Grinned

This reminds us of another local young man who manufactured some home brew one spring and decided to save most of it. He hid it under the front porch, thinking it would be nice

to have a cold drink on hot summer days some months later.

One hot afternoon in August he got a frantic telephone call from his Mom and sped home to find firemen outside the house. The smoke eaters wore a huge grin; the home brew got to working in all the heat and had exploded. It dern near wrecked the porch when it blasted off.

Needless to say, the young fellow, whose name we won't mention, was in bad reputé at home for some months.

SYCAMORE LADY
HEARS OF WILD NITE IN KANSAS

Before she died on Christmas night, 1958, Mrs. William McLagan received a letter from a sister-in-law which had the interesting, humorous and true story related below. The sister-in-law is Mrs. Mamie Remington, who has resided for years on a farm outside of the town of Chetopa, Kansas.

This happened several years ago but it is recent enough to be remarkable for the fact that it portrays a last gentile hint of a pioneer life that still exists in these days of TV, jets and the planning of space flights.

The scene of this story is the Remington farm and lawn; it is late on a warm mid-summer night. Some time after midnight her dog, inside the house at the time, began to bark. Fearing foxes, racoons or other animals were after her chickens, Mrs. Remington let the dog out.

Broom Becomes Weapon

She turned on the yard light and was startled to discover that a civet cat was the cause of the trouble. She wrote that she became alarmed because, even though that type of cat may not win a battle with a dog, if it bites the dog, or vice versa, the dog becomes terribly ill and in some cases dies.

The dog realized what he was up against and decided on measures of safety. He started to run, with the cat right behind him, in a wide circle in the yard. Mrs. Remington didn't have a gun handy and said afterward she would have been afraid to shoot for fear of killing her pet.

So, she grabbed a broom and rushed out to save her dog. Picture it! In the dim rays of the farm yard light, the frightened, barking dog, going at full speed in a circle, and the large civet showing its teeth as it zoomed around and around trying to get close enough to sink its teeth into the dog.

Mrs. Remington, at the best speed she could muster in her late 60's, chased the cat and occasionally swung the broom in a wild haymaker. In the process she broke the broom, but managed to land a solid wallop, knocking the wild beast unconscious. She then ran to the tool house, grabbed an axe, and completed the pre-dawn assassination.

Exhausted, she toddled off to bed and overslept. She woke up when her chickens gathered close to the house and set up a terrific cackle for their morning feed and water.

The dog wasn't seen again until late that afternoon, and for days afterward he sniffed the air and took a good look everywhere before venturing very far from the house.

Man - what a movie or TV comedy picture that would make.

TO POOL VIA RAIL
PART FUN AND PART ADVENTURE

There was a time when this city had no swimming pool other than the Kishwaukee, and at certain times of the summer, the stream was so shallow that fish acquired freckles from the sun beating on their exposed backs.

One summer Randolph Langlois, Leonard Bollinger, Ross E. Millet, Rupert Lindquist, Earl Olson and "Luke" conceived the idea of going to Belvidere by rail. That city had organized a swimming pool at a point where two branches of the Kishwaukee came together. The American dollar was worth a dollar in those days, but boys of high school age had very few of them so it was decided that each of the group would buy a one-way fare via the C&NW passenger train and return by freight - free!

All went well for most of the evening; they had a wonderful time at the pool; the Sycamore-bound freight was found and they boarded it. Some of the fellows climbed in coal cars, some in box cars, etc.

What the young travelers didn't realize until too late was that the trainmen had spotted the "free riders." As the train rumbled into Sycamore, the brakeman signalled the engineer, who probably grinned to himself as he applied more steam, and the long train gathered speed.

The boys soon found themselves being hauled south-bound out of town. One by one they managed to drop off. All the cleanliness gained by the Belvidere swim was suddenly ended as the lads spilled into cinders and coal dust and then skidded across the ditch.

It was an hour before they reassembled to tell their tales of woe. No one was really injured, although Ross Millet was K.O.'d, but there were some torn shirts and pants. "Luke" lost 35 cents and a genuine wool Spencer & Bartlett bathingsuit. The next day he was noted south of the city where, after considerable searching, he found the suit but nary a penny of the lost money.

BASEBALL HERE IS AS OLD
AS THE HISTORY OF THE GAME

No one could be found who could so much as guess on what date, or even in what year, the first game of baseball was played in Sycamore. As near as could be determined, the game must have enjoyed an active following of both fans and players almost as soon as Abner Doubleday invented it.

Games were played on plain fields without grandstands in the early days and, of course, the players had no uniforms. The tight trousers of that period must have made fast base running and stealing quite a chore.

Much impetus was given to the game when Electric Park was organized and a field laid out in that area. Soon there was a grandstand and the old street cars rattled out there Saturdays and Sundays with fans and players for many years. Most games were held on Sundays because in those days to have a Saturday off was almost unheard of.

One fact, however, has never changed. Sycamore and DeKalb teams were hot rivals from the start. This was true of the high school teams as well as the semi-pros. Speaking of high school teams leads us to point out that there was a period of several years when the high school here did not have a team. In more recent years SHS baseball has been revived.

The outstanding semi-pro team of this city's history has been the Sycamore Sons under the able leadership of Donald V. Coffey and Clarence Henigan. In its peak years this team has won several district and state championships and has finished in the upper bracket several times in national tourneys.

An idea of the knowledge Coffey has of the game, which points out one of the reasons for the team's success, is recalled in an incident of the 30's. The Sons were playing the Kingston Tigers on a bright Sunday afternoon in a game played on the local park diamond.

Although the Sons won the game 4 to 3, at the moment we are describing, the game was tied, 3 all. There were two outs in the 9th inning and one of the Sons was on third eagerly waiting for the opportunity to score the winning tally. The batter at the plate had a 3-2 count on him and the fans were all suffering from nervous tension.

Four times the Tigers tried to catch the noteworthy Son's runner off third base. Each time he returned to the bag safely. On the fourth try Coffey raised a hullabaloo, claiming there was a rough ball in use.

He screamed at the umpire and then at the third baseman, "Here, let me see that ball." Don was standing along the coaching lines back of third base at the time. The third baseman finally tossed the ball to Coffey, sure that he would approve it since it was smooth and new.

The smart Son's manager smilingly stepped aside and deliberately missed the catch. Before the third baseman could recover the ball, Don had signalled the runner to head for home. The winning run scored without a play being made on the runner and even though the Tigers protested with all their might, there was nothing they could do about it; Sycamore had won 4 to 3.

Coffey cannot remember the names, but in a game played with this same Tiger platoon, but this time at Kingston, one of the funniest incidents in his baseball history occurred.

A Tiger hit a pop fly to the infield. The sun hit the eyes of the second baseman and he not only missed the catch, but the ball landed smartly on his dome, bounced upward again and the shortstop raced in and caught it before it hit the ground.

When the second baseman came to, the entire array of players and fans were convulsed with laughter.

BOB BROWN POURS COAL
WHILE FIREMEN BATTLE FIRE

It was along in 1924 or 1925 as near as Robert Brown, former coal dealer turned successful grocer, remembers that he and his coal business received a lot of publicity because of a very funny situation that developed during a house fire. A Sycamore reporter later wrote: "Well, Sycamore made the Chicago Tribune again with a headline that read, CARRYING COALS TO NEWCASTLE."

Bob, as he is known here, had received an order to deliver coal to the Frank Conley home on east Sycamore Street. As he and his coal truck drove into the driveway, the fire trucks roared onto the scene. An alarm had been turned in as the roof of the Conley home was on fire.

So, while Bob poured coal into the basement, Sycamore firemen swarmed over the roof of the home with ladders, fire axes and hoses. Bob continued to unload the delivery as assigned and watched the firemen out of the corner of his eye. With his delivery complete, he backed out and drove away; firemen soon recovered their equipment and also drove away. Seems that the fire ended at about the same time Bob quit pouring coal into the place.

As a result of the newspaper stories, he received requests from trade papers and magazines all over the nation. Later stories appeared in many areas of the country, all couched in great humor over the incident.

GENERAL F. W. PARTRIDGE



GENERAL F. W. PARTRIDGE
Clerk of Our Circuit Court,
Soldier And Then Consul In Siam

One of the most interesting persons to live in Sycamore in all its history was General F. W. Partridge. Included in his fascinating career was a term as clerk of the circuit court of DeKalb County and an adventurous and skillful period as American consul general in Bangkok, Siam.

Also, during his glamorous life he really earned that rank of general. Among his adventures was one when he was captured by American soldiers while on a secret mission and jailed as a spy. His life story would make a wonderful and colorful movie.

Soldiering and adventure were born in him. The courage of the American patriot that led him to the far places and into bloody dangers was seeded into him first by his great-grandfather, Captain Samuel Partridge who fought in some of the colonial and Indian wars before the Revolution. The grandfather, Captain Isaac Partridge, continued the tradition with his service in the Revolution. More of the qualities that a soldier requires were imbedded into him by his own father, Captain Cyrus Partridge who shouldered a gun in the War of 1812.

Even a cousin, Captain Alden Partridge, added a bit. At one time he was superintendent of the United States Military Academy at West Point. Later he established and headed the Harrisburg Military College at Harrisburg, Pa.

The father of Sycamore's illustrious General Partridge was born in Norwich, Vermont, July 11, 1786. He spent his entire life there except for his military service in the War of 1812. Also, he was away from home for brief periods while serving as a member of the Vermont legislature. At home he was a merchant and postmaster and also served as high sheriff. He died in Norwich on July 16, 1842.

His son, the future general, was born there in the old homestead on August 19, 1824. He attended the public schools and later attended the American Literary Scientific and Military Academy in Norwich. At the age of 16 he was studying law.

Later he attended Dartmouth College at Hanover, N. H., but had to leave school at the end of his Freshman year due to the

death of his father. A few years later he was busy as an instructor at his cousin's Harrisburg Military College.

On Secret Mission

His first great adventure, that was a prelude to his story-book career, came when he enlisted in the army in 1847. He was sent to the American-Mexican war area on a secret mission. Orders charged him with determining how operations were going at the front, and he was to report directly to the Secretary of War. President of the United States, James K. Polk, signed the order creating the secret mission.

Because of the nature of his mission he could carry no official credentials. While making his investigation of battle area conditions, as he had been ordered, he was captured by American troops and jailed as a probable spy. He was imprisoned at San Juan D'Ulloa. It so happened that another of his warrior cousins, Lieutenant Henry S. Burton, 1st Artillery, was in command at that post. The young adventurer was released and ordered back to Washington; his mission was not accomplished.

Host To Lincoln & Douglas

He farmed for seven or eight years in Kendall County, Illinois. Later he resumed his study of law under Chancellor Kent in Albany, N. Y., and under Franklin Pierce in Concord, N. H. This was the same Franklin Pierce who later became President of the United States.

Back in Illinois he finished his studies under the Honorable Isaac N. Arnold in Chicago, was admitted to the bar, and began practice of law in Sandwich, Illinois in 1857.

Along about this time he had the distinction of entertaining Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas (both at the same time) at dinner. The future general and diplomat, even though he was host, told Mr. Douglas that he couldn't support him. He attended many of the famous debates and later campaigned for Lincoln throughout the entire state.

During the period in which he farmed in Kendall County, he had gained command of an Illinois unit of Militia. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Governor Yates of Illinois commissioned him Captain of Co. E., 13th Illinois Volunteer Infantry.

Gallantry Under Fire

He turned out to be one of DeKalb County's greatest soldiers and rapidly earned promotions. In June of 1861 he was made major in his regiment; in December, 1862 he was again promoted, this time to Lieutenant Colonel.

He was commended for gallant service at that strange and famous battle in the clouds of Lookout Mountain, Tenn., and again for bravery at Missionary Ridge. He was wounded during his fighting in the Chattanooga battle area. Another citation for bravery was also given to him for his action in the battle of Ringgold Gap.

On July 18, 1864, he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General. Shortly after that he had recovered from his battle wounds and was mustered out of the service.

Returning once more to Sandwich, he resumed his practice of law and became quite interested in politics, this time in his own behalf. As a result, he was elected to the post of clerk of the circuit court of DeKalb County and for the first time established residence in Sycamore.

Made Consular General

Many a person might have decided to coast along through life after being involved in two wars, but not this man. He had met General U.S. Grant at Vera Cruz during the Mexican-American War and had enjoyed having dinner with him. Grant at that time was just beginning his military career. At the outbreak of the Civil War it was General Partridge who was instrumental in getting Grant the commission he wanted, a favor that the leader of the Northern Army didn't forget.

When his term as circuit clerk ended in the spring of 1869, Grant, who became President of the United States, returned the favor by appointing General Partridge to the post of Consul General of Siam.

He traveled much while engaged in this important work, and took a vast amount of notes which he had planned to prepare in book form if and when he returned to his Sycamore home. Although he did return here safely, his home burned and the notes were completely destroyed.

Saves King's Son

The General must have been born under a star that marked him for adventure because he once more experienced the thrill offered by danger in that far off land. When rivals of the Siamese King attempted to assassinate the King's son, Consul General Partridge shot the would-be killers.

The far eastern ruler tried to shower Partridge with gifts and favors, but the General refused them all until after he had completed his consular term. In later years his home here contained many relics of his tour of duty in that exotic land.

Halts Persecutions

Then too, there arose a situation that led to a famous diplomatic action in which the General did a great deed for Christianity. There was at that time a ruler of a tribe that was in disfavor with the King. The chieftain of the tribe had set himself up as King of Chiangmai and led his natives in a savage war on Christians. He and his warriors not only executed christians, but missionaries as well.

Consular Partridge pointed out to his friend, the real ruler of Siam, that the United States did not look with much favor upon the acts of his rival, but if he would not or could not do anything about it, Uncle Sam might recognize the rival in order that some official action could be taken to stop the persecution.

As a result of this diplomacy, a treaty was signed which gave greater freedom than ever before to the Christians of Siam. It was the high point of the Sycamore man's diplomatic career.

Brief Rest

In July, 1876 Partridge ended his tour of duty in Siam. He returned home by way of Singapore, the Suez Canal and Europe. By the time he reached Sycamore in October of that year he had seen much of the world.

At long last, the General enjoyed a few years rest, but once more he was called into the service of his government. In 1882 he was named special examiner of federal pensions. He had offices in Rushville, Indiana and in Tiffin, Ohio.

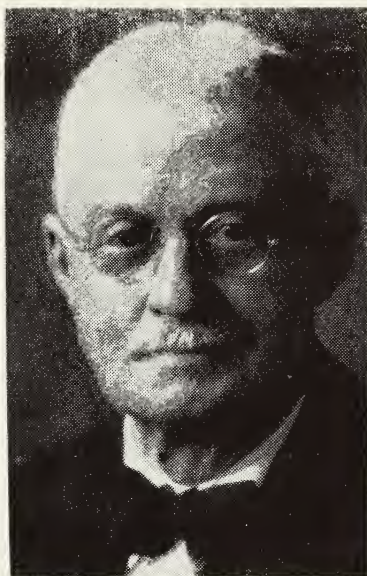
In 1889 he decided it was time to cease his labors and many

responsibilities. He resigned and returned to Sycamore.

In his last year or two he suffered from the infirmities of old age, climaxed by a stroke. He had left his spacious home and had moved into an apartment in a store building he owned in the down town section.

His wife, Mary Pauline had died in 1885; the General passed away on January 22, 1899, and is buried in Elmwood Cemetery.

TOWNSEND SHOULD BE IN
SYCAMORE'S "HALL OF FAME"



One of Sycamore's best loved, most generous and civic minded citizens during the community's first century was the late Frederick B. Townsend. Not only because he held a prominent place in the city's church, civic and business life, but also because of his great and kindly heart and all-time fatherly manner for everyone with whom he came in contact, he is still remembered in the hearts of all who knew him.

Through his benevolences many buildings and institutions were acquired here. If they all were to be created today their total value would run into hundreds of thousands of dollars. The story of his life is told below; it is given in more detail and is more complete than the many written about him in the past.

Druggist To Banker

Frederick Brundage Townsend was born on July 30, 1858, on a farm north of Malta, which is now known as the German Sauter Farm. He was the oldest child and only son of Amos and Eleanor Pierce Townsend. While on the farm he attended country

school and then later attended the Sycamore schools until he was 17 years of age. He enrolled at Lombard College at Galesburg, spending three and a half years there. His mother was a trustee of the college for several years.

After leaving college he became a druggist apprentice at the drug store of Gale & Blocki, Chicago, who, for many years had their main establishment in the old Palmer House.

While working in Chicago he lived with Mr. Gale on a farm at the western edge of the city. This area is now known as Galewood. One of his jobs at Gale & Blocki was to prepare and wrap packages for customers and then make the deliveries. In this phase of his work he came in contact with many interesting and notorious characters of that period.

After his apprenticeship he entered the Eastman Business College at Poughkeepsie, New York and graduated in 1881. One of the sports he often mentioned while at Poughkeepsie was ice boating on the Hudson River.

He returned to Sycamore and entered the private bank of Pierce and Dean. Daniel Pierce was his grandfather and had moved here when Sycamore was a small village. Mr. Pierce, prior to moving here, had operated a tannery business in a town in Sullivan County, New York.

On February 18, 1890 Mr. Townsend was married to Mary Boynton, the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles O. Boynton of Sycamore. There were two children. Charles Boynton Townsend was born in the Amos Townsend home, now the oldest part of the Sycamore Hospital. The daughter, Eleanor, now Mrs. Thomas H. Roberts, Sr., was born in the family home on north Main Street which is now occupied by Mrs. Merle Miner and Miss Mildred Freeman.

Much Civic Generosity

The grandfather, Daniel Pierce, was the owner of some 5,000 acres of land in Iowa and 25 farms here in DeKalb County. After the grandfather's retirement, Frederick became the manager of these farms - a real job in the horse and buggy days. The management involved a tremendous amount of bookkeeping which was ably done by his secretary, Fannie Ahern, who later became Mrs. Joe Montgomery.

During his long career as a local banker he always found time for many civic activities. He was instrumental in having the family donate his parent's home on Somonauk Street to the City of Sycamore for a hospital. He later served as president of the Hospital Board for many years. He was instrumental in obtaining the library building for Sycamore from the Andrew Carnegie Fund. In order to promote this he donated the site and also much of the building's furnishings.

Among his other activities it should be noted that for many years he was Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Elmwood Cemetery Co. Probably one of the most important accomplishments was his participation with a small group, including Henry H. Parke and George Hyde, in the formation of the DeKalb County Soil Improvement Association, which formulated the first farm advisor contract on record with William G. Eckhardt. Townsend was one of the directors of the DeKalb Agricultural Association and the DeKalb County Farm Bureau. The Farm Bureau was one of the first to be organized in the United States. He was also a partner in the Foy and Townsend Livestock Company which operated the feed yards adjoining the Chicago Great Western Railway.

Helped Win Court House

At the time of the contest between the cities of Sycamore and DeKalb for the County Seat, he was one of the leaders and principal contributors in the successful effort to retain the Court House for our city. Jacob Haish of DeKalb had been instrumental in raising \$100,000 to be used to relocate it in DeKalb. Through the efforts of Townsend, Judge Bishop and several other civic leaders, a matching fund was raised and the Court House was retained at its original location.

He was elected alderman of the second ward in 1889 and continued in that capacity until he was chosen to fill the unexpired term as mayor of the late Dr. George Nesbitt in 1894. He was re-elected mayor in 1895 and again in 1897. He served also as a member of the Board of Supervisors for approximately 30 years - during his tenure the new Court House was built in 1903, he being one of the faithful workers who helped to promote the new structure.

Had Kindly Heart

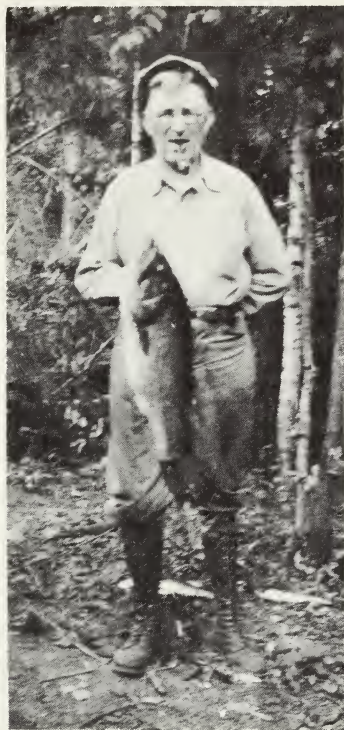
Mr. Townsend was also a Presidential Elector for Grover

Cleveland. After Cleveland's re-election as President, he had charge of the patronage in this district, including the selection of postmasters.

During his whole life he was a lover of horses and at one time was the owner of three pure bred Kentucky horses, one of which was a gaited saddle horse, "Rosina Vokes", named for the famous old time actress. For many years he rode this animal daily around the city. In later years he drove a two-wheeled sulky and was a favorite of many children for the rides he gave them. He always had a pocket full of candy and gum for the kids.

He retired as president of the Pierce Trust and Savings Bank in 1912. On August 18, 1938, a few days after reaching the age of 80, he died.

FRED RAYMOND OF STAGE FAME
LOVED AND GREATLY MISSED



One of the city's more lovable and interesting persons was Fred Raymond. While he is best remembered for his ability at writing plays and music, it is also recalled that he owned and operated a garage and taxi service, and often acted as a guide for sportsmen in northern Minnesota lake and forest country.

Born in Ohio, January 21, 1865, he was forced to shift for himself at a boyhood age because of the death of his father. He gained a grade school education, lived in Kansas for a time, then returned to Ohio and landed in Sycamore in 1897.

He was blessed with a natural ability for writing plays and music. From almost the very beginning of his life in Sycamore that became his profession. One of the first of his plays was "The Missouri Girl." He was the writer and producer; it proved

to be the most popular of all his works. He often played the famous part of "Zeke", the poor boy who came to the big city and into the home of wealth. Not only did he take that play on midwest and national tours, but it was used many times under his direction down through the years in Sycamore as a home talent benefit production.

Some of his other plays, most of which were comedies, were: "Old Arkansas" with its famous character, Jeremiah Snodgrass; "The Section Boss"; and "Little Miss Susan." At one time he had three companies on tour in various sections of the nation all playing plays he had written.

His plays also toured Europe, but it is doubted that he himself ever crossed the ocean. He did buy, and have shipped to Sycamore, an auto from France. It was reputed to have been one of the first automobiles ever in the city. It frightened many local citizens but also created a high degree of interest.

Retired From Stage

In 1914 he retired from show business and entered the automobile field. He established the Star Garage and later added a taxi business. For a time he had a motorized delivery route between the Sycamore-Genoa trains and the post office. He also became very interested and active in the work of the Chamber of Commerce, especially in their program to improve highways.

In later years he became a sportsman greatly devoted to the north woods. It was in the summer of 1940 when he was in northern Minnesota that he became seriously ill. The late Don Underwood drove up there and brought him back home. He died in the home of Carl Hove on September 7, 1940.

One of his most interesting eccentricities was the fact that he had a cigar in his mouth almost constantly but was never known to have smoked one. He chewed away hundreds of them in his lifetime.

It is a sad fact that he left no autobiography or detailed story of his dramatic career. Only a few smiles can be derived from that part of his life. He told one time of playing in a small theater on a new Indian reservation in South Dakota. Included in the audience were three dogs and a half dozen papooses in their little bags HUNG ON THE WALL inside the theater. No one dared order, or even ask, the chief to remove the dogs.

Orchestra?

When playing a small town in the far west on one occasion, the owner of the theater was asked if there was an orchestra. "Oh, yes", he replied. That night two old maids appeared and parked themselves on the troupe's trunks that had been left out in front of the stage. They produced a small, old time phonograph and began playing records. That was their idea of an orchestra.

On another occasion the actor's train paused out in the wide open spaces late one afternoon. Fred asked a rail worker how big the town was where the show was expected to be staged that night. Said the rail worker, "I dunno. See fer yerself. The town's over thar behind that frate car!"

Fun In The Woods

Carl Hove, Don Underwood and Fred often went north on fishing trips. On one such trip, while they were camped alongside a lake in Minnesota, Don and Carl took a stroll to a nearby pump for water. When they were gone some time, Fred got to thinking that maybe they were slipping one over on him; they might be at the store further up the shore line enjoying some cool drinks while he was left alone at camp slapping mosquitoes.

He decided to fool them. Jumping into the car, he zoomed out of camp at top speed. He arrived at the store, bought a coke and went inside to sit down in the hope that he had beaten his two friends. As time went by he finally decided he must be wrong.

Meanwhile, Don and Carl had arrived back at camp and were astonished at the scene. The place looked as if a cyclone had struck. The tent was down, utensils of all kinds were strewn far and wide over the place and Fred's tackle box was squashed.

When Fred returned he wanted to know what in heck had happened. They gently told him that in his brash dash out of camp the car had pulled a tent rope and had thrown everything galley west. They also pointed out his smashed tackle box. Poor Fred was very meek then for the balance of the trip.

Ollie Brown, one time Sycamore Painter, was another who enjoyed an occasional fishing expedition with Fred, Don and Carl. On one accasion they were in a cottage up north. Just at the end of an evening meal, Fred was leaning backward after thoroughly

enjoying a large fish dinner.

Ollie was washing dishes in a pan on the same table. At the same time he was slapping away at flies and mosquitoes. Finishing the dishwashing, he picked up the pan and started out to empty it. Suddenly a loud sounding skeeter buzzed Ollie and he became so angered at the critter that he let go of the pan to take a double handed swing at it.

The pan dropped to the table with a loud thump and a re-sounding kersplash which drenched Fred from head to knees in nice slimy, greasy dishwater. A vast amount of laughter ensued which was punctuated by some biblical language on the part of Fred Raymond. His words could never appear in the Ladies Home Journal. His blast was vehemently applied to painters, particularly those who didn't know much about washing dishes.

On a Saturday before taking off for one of those greatly enjoyed trips, Fred went to Anderson Bros. & Rosene's store and bought sox and underwear for the journey. Returning to the office of his Star Garage on Maple Street, located in the old Ryan building, he laid the package on his desk.

One of the garagemen later swiped the package and replaced it with another. Fred picked it up and headed for his home and a bath. Upon opening the package he found that it contained some female undies - and was he mad!

That night he hustled into the clothing store and started to rake the clerk over the coals for giving him the wrong package. Of course the clerk denied it, and it was a long time before Fred learned who was to blame, but he took it all quite philosophically.

Battle Of The Year

The top story of 'em all was the tale of Fred's taxi and the drunk. That, too, happened on a Saturday night.

One of the town's proverbial old soaks (every town seems to have them) got under way early that evening. It was still daylight on a summer evening when the law spotted the souse piled up on the sidewalk on Maple Street. When the wet citizen noticed the approaching gendarme, he lit out on all fours, crawling for a nearby alley as a place to hide. He failed to make it, however, and was promptly collared.

The chief could see that it would be impossible for the inebriate to be taken to the jail under his own power, so he decided to hire Fred's taxi even though they were only a block away from the lock up.

When the drunk found himself in the taxi he became alarmed and put up quite a battle. He must have thought they were going to take him to Sing Sing.

At last he was subdued, mostly by reason of sheer exhaustion, and they were ready to head for jail when Fred looked with dismay at his once neat looking taxi. It was one of the popular Ford styles of that day, but had been revamped with some fancy leatherette covering on the door panels in the passenger section. During the "battle of the year" the wild man had done a great amount of kicking and as a result holes had been kicked through both doors and some glass had been broken.

As a matter of fact, it required the dexterity and strength of two men to extricate the man's one foot which he had jabbed deeply into the springs at the back of the front seat.

Whether he or the city paid for the damages to Fred's cab isn't remembered. What is remembered, though, is that the following Monday morning at breakfast hour Fred had the customers hilarious with laughter as he related his experience of the previous Saturday evening. Only Fred could tell a story like that; it's too bad we don't have a tape recording of it now.

Interesting Home

Fred never let wealth change him. During the peak of his dramatic career he built and lived in the spacious home at 715 DeKalb Avenue that is now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Frank C. Dean. After Fred gave up the place the late State Senator Adam C. Cliffe owned and lived in it up to the time of the senator's death.

The home was a remarkable one. In the living room the Raymonds had built a miniature stage. There they would create miniature settings as they planned their theatrical productions. The walls of the home were hand painted in artistry by their own hand. The dining room was a delight with painted strawberries. A large barn, built at the rear of the home, was so arranged that the scenery for their dramatic equipment (known in the show world as props) could be painted and stored there.

We like to close this story with the statement that Fred had a heart as big as the Conrad Hilton Hotel. Many a person who was down and out was helped without question or formality. He might never have seen this person before, but if the man, young or old, had any appearance of being honest at heart, Fred was quick and willing to provide him with money, clothing and shelter.

Even today, 20 years after his death, there are those whom he helped who miss him greatly. The friends he made are legion.

LAUGHABLE TALE ABOUT
RYKERT AND RAYMOND TAXI RIDE

A short time before this book was ready for the press another story concerning Fred Raymond was uncovered. It is quite typical of Fred's many little adventures and is too good to be left out.

Eric Nicolet tells the story but cannot recall the exact year, but thinks it was about 1915 or 1916. It was during the time when Fred and Dave Rykert were jointly operating a taxi business out of the Rykert Garage on California Street. It was located about where Wells Lumber Co. and Stegman's Dress Shop maintain their customer's free parking area today.

Trip Is Arranged

One afternoon a stranger approached Dave Rykert and arranged for a taxi ride to Rockford that evening. Later that same afternoon Dave asked Eric Nicolet if he would be busy that night and if not, would he like to enjoy a ride to Rockford. Eric assured him that he wasn't busy and would like to go. The idea was that Fred Raymond, who would drive the taxi, would have some company on the long ride home.

When Fred was introduced to Eric that night he asked him to ride with him in the front seat. A minute later the stranger, wearing three days beard, old clothing and hat, dubiously decorated with bloodshot eyes, arrived and climbed into the back.

It required well over an hour and a half to drive to Rockford in those days. Throughout the entire trip the stranger remained quiet in the back seat while Fred and Eric carried on a friendly conversation in the front.

Arriving in Rockford, Fred said to Eric, "Where do you want to go?" Eric answered, "I don't care." Fred looked at him oddly and then turned to the stranger and asked, "Well, where do YOU want to go?" Said the stranger, "I don't care." That was a minor jolt to Fred so he turned to Eric and asked him, "How come you don't know where you want to go?" "I'm not your passenger," said Eric. "That fella back there is. I just came along to provide company for you on the return trip."

Again Fred turned to the stranger, and realizing for the first time that the man in the back seat was supposed to be his

paying passenger, said, "Whom do you want to see here in Rockford?" The stranger mumbled some name that Eric has forgotten by now.

Fred then queried, "Well, where does he live?" Again the passenger answered, "I dunno." So they drove to a hotel where Fred searched the telephone book, found the number and called the person whom the stranger had named. The butler must have answered and told Fred that the person they wanted was on a trip to Europe.

By this time he was beginning to wonder what he'd gotten himself into. He returned to the car and again asked his fare if he had been given the correct name to call. The stranger didn't utter a word, but looked at Fred strangely and merely bobbed his head in assent.

A further search of the phone book failed to disclose any other listing of a person with the same name or even one with a similar name so Fred became disgusted and decided the best thing to do was head for the police station.

The chief appeared and Fred told his strange story. Having already found that his passenger had no funds with which to pay for the taxi trip, he asked the chief, "What can I do with this fella?"

Costly Trip

The police chief took one look and said, "Oh, we'll take care of him. You needn't worry. We've been looking for him for three or four days. He escaped from the asylum at Elgin earlier this week."

Fred was fit to be tied and sputtered all the way home while Nicolet quietly laughed himself sick. He says he did manage to contain the laughter so as not to hurt Fred's feelings.

The taxi firm never did collect their bill; it cost them not only the loss of fare, but gasoline, wear and tear on the car and about five or six hours loss of taxi revenue in Sycamore. All because an inmate of a booby hatch didn't know where he wanted to go.

LOU'S POEMS AND KIND HEART
ARE IN SACRED MEMORY

Lou Ferguson's name cannot be forgotten on Sycamore's business street, nor will it be forgotten by adults who were kids in his time. Owning and operating a tiny drug store in the front of his home at the corner of Main and Elm Streets, he became one of the most active members of the Chamber of Commerce as well as a summer Santa Claus for the youngsters. A strong sense of humor and a skill with words made him an amateur poet as well. He was a man of small stature with a huge heart of pure gold.

Lou was one of the top salesmen for Chamber events when tickets had to be sold for Merchant's Fun Day or a Chamber banquet. But in the hearts of many he will be best remembered for the things he did for kids. He was always giving something to a youngster.

Amateur Poet

In June, 1948, a polio scare led the Chamber to postpone the regular Kid's Day until later in the fall. Thinking the kids would be disappointed over the delay, Lou staged a miniature Kid's Day all on his own, and at considerable expense and effort.

On Wednesday afternoon, June 23, 1948, between 2:00 and 4:00 o'clock, Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson entertained over 100 kids with sweets, balloons and a clown imported from Chicago.

That he loved his fellowmen is another fact about him that causes him to be remembered and revered. He often wrote little poems for the local papers; in an issue of the True Republican dated, Tuesday, March 24, 1944, the poem below was published on page 1.

The Era of 1922

Of all the business men here
 Way back in twenty two,
 The same men now in business here
 You will find but very few.

But these men have proven,
 That they were on the job to stay,
 And through the twenty years,
 They haven't missed a play.

They are just as enthusiastic,
As they were twenty years ago,
And with their vast experience,
They could put on quite a show.

By telling to each other, about the fun
That they had passed through,
And forget about their troubles,
When the sky was not so blue.

Why not get together, boys,
And celebrate some day?
Now have a little play.

Now there's Roy Montgomery*, the plumber,
Who is always in good form,
He can fix up your furnace,
So that it will keep you nice and warm.

The next is E. G. Cooper*,
Who knows how to catch a bass,
He is still at the old stand,
Selling D-X oil and gas.

Then comes Ed E. Swanson,
Electrician number one,
He can electrify your house,
As bright as any sun.

Charlie Rosene* still sells
Shirts, sox and britches,
He could play golf, too,
If he would keep out of the ditches.

Now Walter Wylde* is an expert,
On bolts and nails and tacks,
But he prefers to be in Florida,
At the opening of the tracks.

And E. H. Wells*, the druggist,
Fills prescriptions for your ills,
While the McAllister* Dry Goods store,
Furnishes the ladies with their frills.

The Wetzel Bros., Jewelers,
Will sell you,
A diamond, brooch or pearl,
And your clocks and watches,
Will be repaired,
By Ira, Vern* and Earl.

Rote* and Maurer*, the barbers,
Will lather up your chin,
And cut off all your whiskers,
Close up to the skin.

Lindberg* and Johnson*,
The Variety Twins,
Have overflowing bins,
Filled up with all kinds of merchandise,
From garden tools to pins.

Charles Michaelson*, the smiling butcher,
Has cut up many a hog,
He also has donated a bone,
To many a hungry dog.

Tony Bleifuss* still serves ice cream sodas,
So big they make the children groan,
He knows just what the children want,
For he has ten of his own.

The Drayton garage for many years,
Has kept cars in good repair,
And with expert mechanics,
He certainly gets his share.

Lou Kenyon for many years,
Has been a master plumber,
And when he completes a job,
You can bet its a hummer.

May you all be in business,
In the year of Fifty-Two,
With health, wealth and happiness,
This is our wish to you!

- Lou Ferguson.

Many Are Gone

Those names in the poem marked with an asterisk (*) are those who have been taken by death, as was Lou, as this book was being prepared.

Let us glance at the firm names involved or referred to above to determine what death and time have done to them in the sixteen years since the poem was published.

The Montgomery plumbing shop was located where the Sycamore Auto Parts business is today. The D-X filling station built and operated by E. G. Cooper is still in business but is under the guidance of Darl Hudson and sons, who have added a big, new station at the corner of State and Locust Streets.

Ed Swanson has retired and his electrical appliance store at State and Maple has become a Laundermat. The Anderson-Rosene clothing store continues, under new management.

Wylde and Son (son and grandson of Walter) continue to maintain the enlarged hardware store. Well's drug store is now owned and operated by David Hamilton; McAllister's dry goods store is owned by the Henderson brothers, Noble and Gernon.

Wetzel brothers jewelry store is operated by Clyde Cooper and Ira and Earl, the surviving brothers have retired and maintain their homes here.

Rote and Maurer's barber shop is under the new management of Bernard McMillan. The old Variety Store is under the name of the Ben Franklin Store and is owned and operated by the respective sons of Lindberg and Johnson.

Michaelson's meat market has now become a modern bakery under the ownership of Mr. and Mrs. Lee Phillips. The Seeaney Inn is now the Snack Shop. It was operated by Tony's son Lyle Bleifuss until a short time ago when it was sold to Ozzie Davis.

Horace Drayton is retired; the Ford garage is owned by the Tallitsch brothers. Lou Kenyon is not so active as he once was and his plumbing shop is now known as Lundin Plumbing and Heating.

"SMOKE" IS GREATLY MISSED
IN RETAIL WORLD OF SYCAMORE

The late Walter "Smoke" Schulz can best be described as a Sycamore retail character who had many friends and was one of the business district's arch individualists. For more than a quarter of a century he served the public, especially the younger set, in one way or another. During those years he was either a soda jerker, short order waiter or operated his own business. He lived with us and we laughed with him during the 30's and 40's.

He became nationally known, and possibly internationally, when the Reader's Digest scooped the world at the time "Smoke", as he was best known, put up the now famous sign over the back bar of his combination restaurant and soda fountain. The sign, in huge block letters read as follows: "THE CUSTOMER IS NEVER RIGHT." The sign was a humorous sensation for a decade.

Liked To Fish

It was "Smoke" also who would close his restaurant, known as the Ben Hur Grill, at any time in spring, summer or fall and go fishing. Making those vacations unique were the little signs he would put in his show windows during such closings. They might read: "Closed For One Week - Bad Case of Fishing Pox. Back Next Monday."

His friends understood and liked him for his quips. A stranger, however, might have been badly confused or might have taken offense at some of the common phrases with which he might answer a store visitor, or might suddenly and spontaneously pop at an unsuspecting customer "resting" in his place.

If you started out by asking him for a match, perhaps before you finished your question he might snap, "I haven't got a cent"; or to the one taking a rest, "Why the heck don't you buy something?"

His individualism took its most drastic form in his attitude toward the Chamber of Commerce. He refused to join it, and he also refused to follow the Chamber policies if he disagreed with them. Store hours and the ever vexing problem of whether or not to close on Thursday afternoons, he solved to suit himself.

His entire business policy was based on his premise: "I'll run my own business. I don't need the Chamber to help me!"

It was individualism of a high order at a time when Sycamore retailers, professional people and the banks had joined and were cooperating with the Chamber almost 100%.

Widely Known

"Smoke" and his famous signs are gone now. Illness took him from us several years ago, but he still is greatly missed. A great many people, including the many salesmen, lawyers and others who motored through town frequently, miss him. We know because they tell us.

They have been heard to remark, "I sure would like to hear "Smoke" say once again, as he did several times in years now gone, 'Gosh, what a night. I bet I had a thousand beers."



The trophies displayed in the pictures above are dramatic proof of the success of Ric Lahti in his long career as an amateur golfer. He started out with a golf club made by his father from a broomhandle, after which Ric made his own clubs until he was given his first 5 iron. The story in the following chapter is one which recalls with much nostalgia the days of his boyhood, cow pasture golf with home made clubs, and happy hours he spent as a special caddy for a prominent golfer in the interesting days of the early 1900's.

THIRD WARD MOMS IN DEKALB MADE PEEVISH BY LOSS OF BROOMHANDLES

This brief history of golf in the DeKalb-Sycamore area begins at Electric Park, a half mile west of Sycamore, where the first golf course in DeKalb County was laid out along about 1908 or 1909. It is a story that involves the coming of the Kishwaukee Country Club in 1913 or 1914, and includes a tale of disturbed mothers in DeKalb who began losing their brooms when their boys got the unique idea of making golf clubs from broom handles. It has in it, too, the story of Ric Lahti's golf life. He is a top flight golfer, and has been a resident of Sycamore for over eighteen years.

Electric Park had been instituted by the Sycamore-DeKalb Power Company as a recreation center. A cluster of homes about that corner on the old car line right of way, plus plenty of land available, set the stage as a mecca for sportsmen of the two towns. A baseball diamond was first, but tennis courts were laid out and a golf course also became a part of the big arena. Harry Joslyn, retired telephone company executive of this city, recalls that his father started his golf playing on the park course. Harry, himself, remembers playing in a tennis tournament on the park courts.

Other local men remembered as having been active players at the Electric Park course were the late Master-In-Chancery, E. M. Burst; Dr. O. H. Smith, dentist; Dave Middleton, a tailor; Dr. George Nesbitt, M.D.; George Dye, a sportsman who also took a hand in promoting the fighting career of "Cyclone" Johnny Thompson; and Dr. Egbert, M.D.

Kishwaukee Country Club

About 1913 or 1914 the Kishwaukee Country Club was born and thereafter Electric Park had to be satisfied with baseball as its chief sports attraction. Sycamore and DeKalb golfers quickly joined Kishwaukee, and as a natural course of events, the demand for caddies arose.

Because the course was closer to DeKalb, it was only logical that there were more caddies from there than from the county seat. While a few lads occasionally pedalled the three or four miles out to the club, it was really a band of boys from the old Third Ward in DeKalb that made up the caddy quota. In addition to Lahti there were Hugo Hakala, who later became mayor

of his home town, Arne Huhta, whose golf prowess rivaled that of Lahti, Elino Saksa, Wayne Erickson and Herman White.

The Kishwaukee River meandering through the Country Club was a hazard for the golfers, but a veritable treasure for the caddies. Golfers were constantly losing balls in the river and it was supposed to be the caddy's job to fish 'em out. Often the lads would make believe they had failed and would hide the balls in known caches along the river bank to be retrieved later, cleaned and sold. It was a real good business for the kids.

In fact, it became so good that the boys set up a system whereby one or two would gain lost ball salvage rights along the creek for a day. They drew name slips from a hat; the first two names drawn would win the salvage rights for the day. On big country club days when many golfers swarmed over the fairways, the salvage might net the lads as much as \$10 or \$12.

Caddying led Huhta and Lahti to take more and more interest in the game. They were finally so badly bitten with the golf bug that they decided to find a course and clubs of their own. It was Mathew Lahti, Ric's dad, who sparked the idea of making a club from a broomhandle and a two-by-four. In fact, Papa Lahti helped make their first one.

It was made by first sawing the straw section from the broom and then shaving the rough end of the handle down to a wedge shape. Next, a block was cut from a two-by-four and a hole bored into it at an angle. The wedged end was shoved into the hole in the block and a nail was driven down through the top to hold it in place. The hole being at an angle gave the club's head a pitch similar to that of a genuine golf club.

Next, nails were driven into the face side of the club's head in such manner as to create a make-shift metal face somewhat similar to the metal facing on real clubs.

The wealthy Mayo family owned considerable land on the edge of DeKalb and it was in one of their pastures that Ric and his dad laid out their golf course.

A Nasty Hazard

The course consisted of nine holes and each cup was made by using an empty tomato or soup can from home. An unexpected hazard of a nasty nature developed because the innocent bovines,

not being particularly adapted to golf courses, would occasionally use one or more of the cups for a bathroom "fixture." When a boy's ball landed in a hole that was in that condition, he had the mean job of fingering it out, cleaning it and then cleaning the cup. Ugh!

Soon all the boys in the neighborhood had broomhandle golf clubs. Those Third Ward mothers who had not been informed became puzzled at first and then downright peevish at the disappearance of their brooms. Grocers didn't complain, though, as they were selling brooms - and how! It seems the boys would quite often swing too lustily and too low, thus breaking the handles. It was, of course, of world shaking importance to all those excited kids that a new broomhandle club be obtained as soon as possible.

Surviving moms of today look back and laugh about those days as they take their last long look down memory lane, and probably wish they could live it all over again and see their now grown sons as boys once more. But, in the days during which their brooms were suddenly missing, they were apt to become all shook up.

Barefoot Golf Players

Since they could not afford golf shoes, the boys played in their bare feet. That brings to mind another hazard of the Mayo cow pasture course. It was another nasty one, but perhaps not quite so bad as the cupping cows.

The American Steel & Wire plant poured its chemical residue, consisting of a slimy goo of oil and tar, into the Kishwaukee. When the boys lost their golf balls in the creek and had to wade in after them they emerged with legs, hands and sometimes their faces covered with the awful goo.

In spite of the crude clubs, barefoot play and gooey hazards, the boys had a grand time and look back on that period as being one of the happiest of all their days.

Gee, Whilikins, A Real Iron

One of his proudest days came when Ric appeared on the Cow Pasture Golf Course with a GENUINE no. 5 iron, a gift of the late Sycamore golfer, Charles Harney. Harney made the gift as a result of Lahti's excellent work as caddy and because

the boy appeared to have a real love for the game. Then, too, he sort of pitied all the kids who had to play with those broom handle clubs.

Ric On His Way

From that day on he became a sort of grand and exalted potentate of the Cow Pasture Country Club; it was a red letter day in his life for sure. It was about this time, too, that Ric was chosen to be his special caddy by the late Charles Bradt, retired business executive who had taken up golf as a hobby and was doing exceptionally well at the game. Bradt traveled all over Northern Illinois to take part in tournaments and thus Ric learned all there was to know about tournament golf.

During the early 30's he began to acquire additional clubs and play regularly on the Kishwaukee Country Club course. The days of broomhandle clubs and barefoot play were ended. Today Ric often wonders if he didn't have more real fun in the old cow pasture than he does now.

As his skill increased, he began to place high in tournaments and match plays. He began to accumulate prizes of all kinds and shapes until now he has the largest golf trophy collection in Sycamore.

He did not play in Sycamore much until the 30's. But he played here more frequently as the course improved and as more tournaments and special invitational matches were arranged on the Sycamore Community Park Course.

He and several other DeKalb golfers enjoyed the invitational honor of opening the second nine holes of the park course in the fall of 1930. The other three DeKalb men in his foursome were Gus Novotny, Wix Garner and Dee Hunt. Ric recalls that there was not much of a crowd on hand that day as the weatherman refused to cooperate. It was a gloomy, rainy day. He remembers that as they completed play of the first nine, and were about to inaugurate the new nine, they paused for refreshments at the tiny shed that then served as a shelter house. Their hosts were the late William McAllister, Sycamore merchant, and Mr. A.B. Gochenour, Sycamore industrialist.

Lahti turned pro, technically speaking, during the years of 1951, 1952 and 1953, but has since resumed his amateur status. His reason for turning pro was only for the purpose of

of operating the golf shop at the country club for those three years.

Most Beautiful Award

The trophy of which Ric is proudest, and one which anyone would be eager to have, is the David Smart Award. The late David Smart was publisher of Esquire, the men's magazine. It was he who donated the large and really beautiful award, but he stipulated that it had to be won three times in succession to gain permanent possession.

Competing annually against from 75 to 100 midwest golfers, Lahti won first place at each of the tournaments of 1941, 1942 and 1943. The tourneys were staged at such places as Olympia Fields, Brookwood and similar courses.

Ric's lovely wife and family are justifiably proud of his golf prowess. It should be added that Mrs. Lahti did not play golf at the time they were married, but in self defense and to avoid being a golf widow, she learned the game. She is very happy she did.

LIGHTWEIGHT WINS MIDDLEWEIGHT;
KNOWN AS "CYCLONE"



Sycamore's sports world has been emblazoned with headlines telling of stars of many track and field events down through the years, but brightly shining far above them all is the name, "Cyclone" Johnny Thompson, one time middleweight prize fight champion of the world. That the Thompson career is still remembered all over the nation was brought sharply to the attention of a Sycamore visitor to St. Petersburg, Florida in February, 1959.

The Sycamore man was climbing the steps of St. Mary's Church that evening when a man built just about like Thompson stepped up and wanted to sell some tickets for a March event. The tourist declined by saying, "Sorry, but I'll be back in the middle of all the ice and snow in Sycamore, Illinois by then."

The St. Petersburg man was brought up rather abruptly by the statement. He cocked his head to one side, put his finger to his temple in thought and mused, "Sycamore, Sycamore - let's see. Oh yeah! "Cyclone" Johnny Thompson."

Although the "Cyclone" had hung up his gloves in retirement probably 40 years before, here was a man who remembered Sycamore because of the saga of that great fighter.

John Thompson was born on a farm in Ogle County on June 20, 1875. He absorbed some grammar school education but remained close to the farm. However, he took quite an interest in sports as soon as he was old enough to know what they were all about. Elsewhere in this book the reader will find a story concerning Strangler's gym, where the Henderson store is now located. It was there that Johnny began his career - but, as a wrestler.

Finally he fought a few matches just for fun in the gym. Chicago fight promoters noted his build and his interest in sports and persuaded him to try his skill in the fight game. He was urged to go to Chicago and was eventually matched with a fighter by the name of Benny Yanger. In this first fight, held in the Board of Trade Building gym, he knocked Yanger down 4 times in three rounds.

Farm Boy Does It

That did it. He was matched with another fighter whose name has been lost in history. This time there was a \$250 side bet. Johnny brushed that opponent aside with a knockout in eight seconds of the first round. The Chicago sports writers began taking note of the Sycamore farm boy a few short months later when he had by that time engaged in 60 fights and had won 59 of them. The 60th one was a draw. In his first 36 fights he had won 29 by knockouts.

In 1906 he was matched with "Fighting" Dick Hyland in a bout scheduled for 20 rounds in Los Angeles. By that time the Sycamore battler had earned his permanent title of "Cyclone" and was winning world wide recognition. Some idea of what he was like, and also what his opponent was like, can be learned from the pre-battle statistics for the Hyland fight.

Hyland		Thompson
19	Age	30
128	Weight	133
5'-4"	Height	5'-4"
65-3/4"	Reach	64"
35-1/2"	Chest	30-1/2"
19"	Thigh	18-1/2"
14-1/2"	Calf	13"
12"	Biceps	10-1/2"
12"	Forearm	10-1/4"
8"	Wrist	7"
16"	Neck	16-1/2"

Thompson and Hyland met three times. The first time Thompson won in the ninth round on an unintentional foul; the second time he lost on a decision, but the fight went the full 20 rounds; and the third time they fought to a draw, again in the full 20 rounds.

A tremendous amount of publicity was given to the first fight between the two. On one occasion almost the entire first page of the Los Angeles Times sports section was taken up with a cartoon showing two giant robot buzz saws meeting head on - that would be Thompson versus Hyland.

World Champion

Thompson's career reached its peak in Sydney, Australia in 1911. On February 11th he tangled with Billy Papke and took over the middleweight championship of the world. Papke had claimed the title before as a result of the death of the former champion, Assassin Ketchel.

Thompson and his wife had been touring Australia where he had been staging a series of fights on a guarantee of \$5000 plus expenses for the trip. The championship battle was staged at Rushcutters Bay. Sydney sports writing style of the day called the fight "A Sports Disturbance."

It was a real tough fight for Johnny; Papke was taller, heavier, and had a greater reach. In fact, "Cyclone" had to jump to land a solid blow, but he won on points as the struggle went the full 20 rounds.

The "Cyclone" had already built himself a wonderful reputation for courage and ring skill in his previous fights in Australia and, of course, some of his reputation had followed him there from America. There was one particular time when he had fought the Montana Kid to a ten round draw. Thompson had broken a bone in his hand in the second round but gamely refused to quit. He fought so savagely with his one good hand that he took less punishment than might have been expected. That sensational fight was an event of July 20, 1906 in Los Angeles.

He took a lot of punishment in establishing the great record he amassed. As a result he had one cauliflower ear, but in the end he had saved quite a sum of money - owned a farm and had money in the bank. He retired from the ring in 1913.

Nearly K. O'd. By Horses

His widow, now Mrs. George Walrod, has three large scrap books filled with news clippings of stories telling of the prowess of her illustrious husband. He fought all over the U.S.

The worst beating he ever took was as a result of a frightened team of horses running away near his farm northwest of town. Johnny was dragged some distance and though he finally recovered, he was never quite the same again.

In later years he told a Chicago sports writer that he had fought 204 fights in sixteen years in the ring, had never been knocked out, and was knocked down only once in that long trail of battle. His is one of the most remarkable records in the annals of prize ring lore.

The Sycamore battler gained the nickname "Cyclone" not only because of his aggressive ability and will to carry the fight to his opponent, but also because he could take a lot of punishment and still continue for 20 rounds, most often to win. His long string of victories are as much due to his skilled tactics in the ring as anything else. An Australian writer in describing one of Thompson's fights that led up to the great championship bout, wrote as follows: "Thompson almost stood still in all of the first round, but in the second he let go - - and WOW!"

In the first round of that fight he studied the methods of the man he faced. His waiting tactics sort of lulled the other fighter into the thought that maybe this guy from the American farmland wasn't so good after all. When Johnny went into high gear within the first few seconds of the second round, however, it caught the overconfident Australian off balance; the second round didn't last very long.

A study of his record is a fascinating experience for anyone interested in sports. At the close of this story we give you in detail the results, the number of rounds, and the name of his opponent for 135 fights officially recorded from 1898 through 1912.

Of the 135 total he had 83 victories, 48 by knockouts; 21 that ended in a draw; 9 that ended in no decision; 21 losses; and one which was stopped by the referee. In the fight that was halted by the referee, there is no record as to who was given the decision.

During the first three years of his ring career, "Cyclone" fought 55 times. He won 23 by knockouts, fought to a draw in 28, lost 2 by decision, and lost 2 as a result of fouls. Below is the record for that first phase of his career covering the period from 1898 through 1901.

Won By Knockouts					
	Rounds		Rounds		Rounds
E. J. Price	1	Jack Calmers	3	Jack Kulp	3
Kid Weimer	3	Orville Thorne	2	Sandy Nelson	3
Billy Alms	5	Kid Weimer	1	Kid Sanderson	1
Orville Thorne	4	Harry Fields	2	Henry Earns	3
Jim Balwick	2	Hank Mansfield	2	Kid Weimer	5
Kid Green	2	Harry Little	3	Kid Ryan	5
Joe Percente	2	Kid Green	4	Jack Rock	5
Charles Conway	3	Rocks Swanson	2		

Fought to a Draw					
Kid Weimer	6	Red Morrisy	10	Jack Reed	6
Henry Earns	6	Kid Munzie	3	Jack Galligan	6
Billy Mott	6	Kid Black	4	Frank Jordan	6
Billy Malcolm	10	Jimmy Kileen	4	Kid Black	10
Jimmy Kileen	6	Bob Porter	4	Ole Olson	6
Bob Porter	6	Frankie Baker	4	Harry Griffin	6
Kid Goodwin	6	Young Kenny	6	Otto Sieloff	15
Orville Thorne	6	Frank Clancy	10	Billy Moore	15
Henry Fagin	10	Freckly O'Brien	6	Jack Dougherty	6
		Otto Sieloff	10		

Lost By Decision					
Adam Ryan	6			Emil Sanchez	6

Lost By Foul					
Shine Reed	4			Harry Griffin	3

The second phase of "Cyclone" Johnny Thompson's career covers the period from 1902 through 1909.

Code:

L - Lost	D - Draw	WF- Won by Foul
LF- Lost on Foul	ND- No Decision	
K - Won by Knockout	W - Won by Decision	

1902

	Rounds		Rounds
Battling Nelson	- L - 6	Paddy Norton	- K - 4
Mickey Riley	- D - 6		

1903

Charley Neary	- K - 6	Battling Nelson	- L - 6
Curly Ulrich	- L - 4	Curly Ulrich	- W - 6
Curly Ulrich	- LF- 5	Curly Ulrich	- W - 3
Mickey Riley	- D - 10	Harry Fails	- D - 10

1904

George Memsic	- L - 6	Kid Farmer	- L - 6
Mickey Riley	- L - 6	Harry Fails	- D - 6
Harry Griffin	- W - 6	Henry Fagin	- D - 10

1905

Jimmy Potts	- L - 6	Young Scotty	- W - 6
Kid Farmer	- D - 10		

1906

Frank Jordan	- D - 10	Kid Herrick	- LF- 6
Frank Jordan	- D - 8	Otto Sieloff	- K - 8
Edward Purdy	- W - 10	Billy Mayfield	- W - 10
Kid Black	- K - 2	Harry Griffin	- WF- 3
Walter Parker	- W - 6	Montana Kid	- D - 10
Dick Hyland	- WF- 9	Dick Hyland	- L - 20
Lew Powell	- LF- 10	Fred Ward	- K - 6
Jack Clifford	- K - 5		

1907

Rounds		Rounds	
Maurice Thompson	- K - 15	Rufe Turner	- K - 11
Dick Hyland	- D - 20	Peter Sullivan	- L - 20
Rudolph Unholz	- WF- 8	Charley Neary	- L - 10
Freddie Welch	- ND- 6	Kid Goodman	- D - 12

1908

Johnny Murphy	- K - 8	Mickey Gannan	- D - 12
Kid Dalton	- K - 5	Rudy Unholz	- K - 11
Kid Dalton	- K - 16		

1909

Peter Sullivan	- L - 20	Mickey Gannan	- D - 10
Adam Ryan	- ND- 6	Roy Bronson	- ND- 6

Third Phase

1910 Thru 1912

1910

Tom McCarthy	- D - 20	Chas. Norval	- W - 10
Chick Hudson	- K - 7	Peter Sullivan	- K - 9
Birdlegs Collins	- K - 17	Peter Sullivan	- K - 9
George Leatham	- K - 3		

In Australia

Rudy Unholz	- W - 6	Hughie Mehegan	- K - 5
Tim Land	- K - 20		

1911

Jerry Jerome	- K - 3	Tim Land	- K - 2
Dave Smith	- L - 20	Billy Papke	- W - 20**

**Defeating Papke on points in 20 rounds in Australia gave the Middleweight Championship of the World to Thompson.

Next Three Fights in U.S.

Hugo Kelly	- ND- 10	Willie Lewis	- ND- 10
Frank Claus	- ND- 10		

Returned to Australia

Bandsman Rice	- L - 20
---------------	----------

1912

	Rounds		Rounds
Dave Smith	- L - 20	Jack Lester	- K - 20
Jack Lester	- L - 20		

Back In The U.S.

Frank Mantell	- D - 20	Geo. K.O. Brown-Stpd.	- 5
Eddie McGoorty	- ND- 10	Art Godfrey	- K - 8

* * * * *

For lack of competition the middleweight championship was allowed to die out in 1912. Thus Thompson retired undefeated as champion. He outlived the crown.

The final referee, death, counted him out on May 28th, 1951. The injuries sustained in the runaway mentioned earlier in this chapter, plus age, caused complications during the last of his life. He was one of those rare prize ring leaders who lived under his own good code; one reason he remained in the ring so long was his clean living.

DIXIE SIMS WAS PROUD OF IMPRESSIVE BOXING RECORD

Eugene "Dixie" Sims had very little in appearance or wealth in his later years to indicate that at one time he was one of the most skilled boxers of the prize ring. He bent the scales at over 300 pounds, but as a youngster his weight was more in the fly-weight class of 110 or 112 pounds. As a middleweight he had climbed to 158 pounds and only technicalities prevented him from taking the championship of the world in that weight class.

He lived on his chicken ranch a couple of miles northwest of Sycamore off the old Brickville road. The little record books and his albums showing records of famous fighters and pictures of people and events of years ago were worn and faded, but his memory remained very clear about the many fights he had engaged in.

Born in Humboldt, Tennessee on April 14, 1882, he was a frail lad for the first few years of his life. Yet he saw the day at the age of 22 when he narrowly missed taking the middleweight championship of the world right there in his boyhood hometown.

First Pro Fight - Ninety Cents

In May, 1899, he left his home in the south and headed for Chicago with dreams of wealth and fun in the growing windy city. He worked at various jobs from the first day he landed there. Later he began working out in a gym in the 22nd ward of Alderman O'Connor. A mail carrier in the neighborhood took a liking to Dixie's style of boxing and sponsored him.

His first professional fight was staged at Lake Street and Lincoln Avenue. For that fight he received the winner's share of the purse - ninety cents. His prize was 75% of the total gate which was collected by passing the hat. Dixie knocked out his opponent, Allie Brown, in the first round.

After being in Chicago for a time, he began to realize that the cost of living and good times was too high even though he was earning more than ever before. He decided to seek a small town in the rural areas not too far from the big city.

When he filed an application with an employment agency, he learned that there were two jobs open in the Williams Hotel in Sycamore. One was a dishwashing job that paid \$12 a week

and the other offered \$15 for the job as a porter. He chose the dishwashing job, arriving here in August of 1899.

One of the greatest fighters Dixie helped to train while in Sycamore was Billy Papke, later the middleweight champion of the world. But Dixie's good deeds were not confined solely to the fight game. He donated the land on which the North Avenue Baptist Church was built. Also, he aided Marvel Stockwell, a Sycamore boy, to gain an education. Today Stockwell, who resides in Pacific Palisades, California, is a professor of economics at the University of California.

Tremendous Meal

Stories of Dixie's stunts are enough to fill a book by themselves, but this one will give you a general idea. A group of local men once won a sizeable collection of bets when he ate a entire chicken, potatoes and gravy, a vegetable, and a quart of ice cream at one sitting. It was a prodigious meal, and became the talk of the town for weeks.

His fame as a boxer and generous citizen spread over the entire nation. He had testimony of this in his cigar box file in his home. When he and his wife celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in September, 1954, they received letters of congratulation from President Eisenhower, Governor Stratton, U.S. Senator Everett Dirksen, Attorney General Latham Castle, Mayor H. J. Holz of his hometown of Humboldt, Tenn., the Honorable Wm. J. Fulton, then judge of the Illinois Supreme Court, State Senator Dennis Collins, Charles B. Townsend, Plant Manager of the huge Sycamore Anaconda mill, and Harold V. Engh, President of the Turner Corporation.

Before presenting Dixie's fight record in detail, mention should be made that the old Williams Hotel, where he first was employed in Sycamore, was located at the corner of California and Elm Streets, now the site of the Sycamore locker plant. Also, for many years he operated a store and restaurant on California Street across from the Anaconda plant.

Among his many friends in the fight game were: Joe Louis; "Cyclone" Johnny Thompson; Sycamore's other famous boxer; Battling Nelson, Jack Kerns, and others. Nelson once made the statement, "Dixie Sims was one of the finest tacticians I have ever seen in the prize ring." Dixie valued that statement as one of the greatest tributes he ever received.

Official Record Of Eugene "Dixie" Sims

158 Pound Middleweight

Year	Result	Opponent	Place	Rounds
1900	Won	Allie Brown	Chicago	4
	Won	Kid Kelley	Chicago	4
	Won	Frank Timly	Chicago	4
	KO'd	Allie Brown	Chicago	2
	KO'd	Kid Malloy	Chicago	3
	Won	Eddie White	Davenport	4
	KO'd	Kid Mobile	Milwaukee	2
	Won	Allie Brown	Chicago	1
	KO'd	George Petrie	Belvidere	2
	Exhibition	Johnny Kelley	Chicago	4
	Won	Jack Hanlon	DeKalb	6
1901	Draw	Jim Jucy	Memphis	10
1902	Won	Young Christo	Chicago	6
	Exhibition	Frank Williams	Sycamore	3
	Draw	Jesse Shipp	Chicago	6
	Exhibition	Tommy Mawatt	Chicago	6
	Draw	Johnny Martin	Chicago	6
1903	Won	Kirk Glennon	Humboldt	6
1904	Won	Christy Williams**	Humboldt	6
1906	Exhibition	Johnny Thompson	Sycamore	3
1909	Tech. KO	Dixie Kid***	Memphis	8
	Lost to	Larry Temple	Memphis	8
	Draw	Huck Bones	Memphis	8
	Won	Kid Pleasant	Memphis	8
	KO'd	Battling Harris	Memphis	7
	KO'd	Johnny Flynn	Memphis	6
	KO'd	Kid Hughes	Memphis	8
1910	KO'd	Peter Mitchell	Memphis	4
	KO'd	Kid Hughes	Memphis	7
1911	KO'd	Abe Phillips	Memphis	3
	Won	Henry Singer	Sycamore	10

In addition to the above, Dixie recalled four fights in North Dakota that he won, but he didn't remember the dates. The four victories were over: Johnny Kelley, 4 rounds; Tommy Mawatt, 4 rounds; Danny Gooding, 4 rounds; and Johnny Pirpas, 6 rounds.

He asks credit also for two more KO's. In one he knocked out Hot Dog Perry at Caledonia and in the second one he flattened the same fighter at Electric Park, both fights lasting 5 rounds.

****Dixie** called attention to the fact that this same Christy Williams, over whom he won in 1904, forced the famous Battling Nelson to go 17 rounds for the world crown.

*****This** 1909 fight with the Dixie Kid is the one in which Sims almost won the world's championship. It happened this way.

Because they both had the name Dixie, the Sycamore man misunderstood the referee's instruction at one point in the fight and headed for his corner. The Kid struck him from behind and stunned him. The referee then ruled that the fight should be awarded to Sims because of an illegal blow, but the Sycamore battler wouldn't have it that way. He asked for a few minutes rest and then returned to the scrap, only to lose by a technical knockout in a succeeding round.

Dixie's record summary shows a total of 32 fights of which he won 15 by decision, 13 by KO's, had four draws, and lost 2. He was never knocked out other than that one technical knockout at the hands of the Dixie Kid.

The reader will recall that he earned only ninety cents for his first fight. His biggest purse, that of his championship bout in 1909, was \$8,000 but, after sending \$200 home to his wife, the other \$7,200 was soon used up on continuing his career and on gay parties.

To the young lads aspiring to gain fame in the boxing ring, Dixie was quick to point out that the road is a long and difficult one. Also, he felt that the rewards are great only to the point where good management begins and ends with the career.

SUPERINTENDENT BLANCHARD BADLY NEEDED IN SYCAMORE YEARS AGO

In the late 1890's life became a bit rugged for Sycamore's school superintendents. Elderly people tell stories of how lads of thirteen or fourteen years were tall, muscular and toughened by the hardships of pioneer life in those days. There came a time when boys became so difficult to manage that school boards, both rural and city, had trouble keeping superintendents on the job.

Their troubles ended abruptly, though, when the board hired A. J. Blanchard. One or two incidents, and the consequences that followed, led the teenagers of that day to decide they had better toe the mark - or else.

One afternoon a couple of lads got into a fistic argument and their teacher attempted to halt it. She was driven off when the lads both turned on her, so she took her problem to Supt. Blanchard.

He quietly finished a bit of desk work, took off his coat, hung it carefully over the back of his desk, and removed his spectacles. He heard the scuffling and came upon the boys engaged in a gladiatorial contest that threatened to erupt into a free for all among the bystanders. The school chief barged through the group, reached out with his long arms that contained muscles like a product of the U.S. Steel Company, and grabbed both boys by their coat collars.

There followed a sound similar to a baseball connecting with Mickey Mantle's bat when the two heads were brought together, but Blanchard was just getting under way and wasn't even breathing hard. He swung both boys through the air like empty grain sacks and planted them near a window.

Jerking open the window before the boys could regain their thought processes, Blanchard yanked them up and in two seconds had them hanging outside of the second floor window! After he banged their heads together a couple of times more, he hauled them in and asked them if they cared to continue their fight. Needless to say, they were white with fear and as meek as a pair of deflated cream puffs.

A few days later the superintendent learned that a boy had used some bad language in sassing a woman teacher. He walked

into the classroom, picked the boy up out of the seat, sat there himself, and turned the youngster over his knee and, while the girls giggled with glee, administered to the sassbox what Paddy gave the drum.

That was a great year in Sycamore schools; discipline was wonderful. Also, grades were much better as boys and girls both gave more attention to their readin', writin' 'n 'rithmetic.

FIRST WOMAN SHERIFF WASHES AWAY RIOT
FIRST NIGHT ON JOB

On January 11, 1928, DeKalb County officially acquired its first woman sheriff. Mrs. Fred (Helena) Dolder had been appointed to fill out her husband's term; he died in office a few months before. When the unexpired term was completed, she was elected to another full term.

The evening of her first day on the job was a memorable one. The prisoners rioted and went on a hunger strike. Sheriff Dolder first pleaded, then scolded, and when that failed to quiet the unruly group, she acted.

Dragging a fire hose from its wall case, she then let them have it full blast. Her action that night proved to the prisoners that she was the boss and would tolerate no more trouble of that kind.

Chicago Tribune Story

During 1928 the Chicago Tribune thought enough of the situation here to send out one of its ace woman reporters. As a result, Mrs. Dolder received a sizeable story in that major daily that gave her full credit for doing an excellent job.

Her son, A. F. Dolder, was her chief deputy and today's county judge, Ross E. Millet, was her assistant chief and office deputy. Mrs. Dolder retired from her career without a blemish on her record.

ATTORNEY REFUSED TO DEFEND
HIS OWN SON - GUILTY

Among the interesting and lovable people Sycamore has had in its citizenry was the late Attorney Carl Kellman, who received considerable publicity on one occasion when he refused to intercede on behalf of his own son, Robert.

"Bob" was then attending Northern Illinois State Teacher's College in DeKalb. While driving his car to school one day, he was nabbed by one of the local policemen and charged with a traffic violation.

Afraid that his car would be taken away from him, he decided it would be best if his father didn't hear of his run in with the law. He readily admitted his guilt when he appeared before the late Joseph Muhe, police magistrate at the time, but Joe, an ardent Democrat like "Bob's" father, realized there might be politics involved so hesitated to act on the matter at once.

The court finally turned the ticket over to Mayor Frank Ashelford, who decided to see Mr. Kellman. When he learned of his son's trouble, he called him into his office and said, "You get this ticket?"

"Yes, sir", answered the young man.

"Well, are you guilty?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, take this ticket and go pay your fine."

"Bob" arranged to pay the fine in small installments, and after a short time was back in the goodgraces of his father once more.

PETRIE WAS UNIQUE COP;
DID A GOOD JOB ON MANY DRUNKS

Walter Petrie, who was on the night shift of the Sycamore police force for fourteen years, actually never made an arrest. Stories of his unique work as an officer are many.

He would shake up drunks thoroughly and, if they could walk, he would take them home. He always said their wives would give them more punishment than the courts;

On the other hand, if a man was too drunk to walk, he tossed him into the clink without a warrant and later in the morning, after the "old soak" had sufficiently dried out, he'd send him home.

But woe unto the drunk whom he might have sent home and then saw down town again the same night. Officer Petrie would introduce the inebriate to some corporal punishment of his own making. He'd generally have the man begging him to quit before he finished, and nine times out of ten it was a good cure.

Walt had bad luck in his last year on the job. On a rainy night as he stepped off the State Street curb to walk across Maple Street, he was run down by a car and suffered a severe leg fracture. It happened on October 22nd, 1932.

He was in the hospital for a long time and never did become active on the force again. The Illinois State Compensation Commission refused to pay, but the city council and friends made up a fund that helped to keep him adequately.

ONE MAN PARADE STROLLS OUR "LOOP"
IN BLUE PAJAMAS

An extensive search of the law books and considerable conversation was stirred up about 10:30 o'clock on the evening of Wednesday, July 31, 1929, when LaVerne "Red" Averill appeared in Sycamore's 'loop district all dolled up in brilliant pajamas. He was absolutely the first in Sycamore to stage such an open air fashion show.

Although the Sycamore constabulary, aldermen, city attorney, mayor and several hundred citizens studied and argued the incident at all angles, no arrest could be made. It was found that no law or city ordinance was on the books to cover P.J.'s in public.

Averill and James Oldham had plotted the escapade and carried it further by planning a golf contest in pajamas to be held at the Community Park golf course the following Sunday. There is nothing on record to show whether or not the contest was actually conducted in these "uniforms."

The evening show put on by "Red" was surely worth the price of admission. His P. J.'s were of brilliant robin's egg blue trimmed in jet black. He also donned a straw hat, a la Maurice Chevalier, and - oh, yes, - he swaggered a cane, too.

Now Look - In 1960

It was said at the time that the idea started in North Carolina, a notoriously hot area in July. Down there the editor of a paper told his readers that pajamas were the only good, common sense hot weather garment. As a result, a craze of wearing them swept the nation.

However, in Sycamore it never reached an acute critical status. Too many were too timid here in that day for such apparel, but in this summer of 1960 men wear Bermuda shorts, short sleeved and loudly decorated Hawaiian shirts and sometimes loud sox on feet in sandals. The gals are sweet in brief shorts, sometimes bare tummies and halters. This will be of gleeful interest to archeologists digging into Sycamore's ruins 50,000 years from now in an effort to learn more about the costumes of those "queer horsey Americans."

SAD CHARACTER IN SYCAMORE LIFE IS INTERESTING STORY

Bobby Mose, whose correct name was Robert Bernstein, was an interesting person of the 1900's in Sycamore. No other man like him was known in this locality. Bobby was more to be pitied than ridiculed, but the sad fact is that he received more of the latter than he should have.

No one can recall just how he happened to be here, but for many years his activities were funny and only occasionally a menace to anyone. The few times he wanted to hurt someone were the result of his having been teased.

He was one of the shortest men ever known here; he was about 4 feet 8 inches and a little rotund, also. Poor Bobby's mind never developed sufficiently to enable him to live on a par with his fellow man.

Many Birthdays

He was permitted to sleep in the back room of a jewelry store. His room was not much larger than a closet and there is some doubt as to whether it had ever been cleaned. Two sources of income enabled him to eat. One was to have a succession of birthdays; he was forever appealing to someone to give him money because it was his birthday. Also, a quarter came his way now and then when he did a cleaning job in a pool room or saloon.

One of his pet activities was to meet the old midnight passenger train on the Chicago Great Western RR. Bobby felt that it was his duty to help anyone home from the station when he assumed they required aid.

A young Swedish maid came out here one night. She was not well acquainted, but had a job in a prominent Sycamore home. For some reason Bobby, then in his 40's or 50's, decided she needed an escort. He stepped up and took charge of her completely, including placing his arm around her.

The unsought protection frightened the girl so badly she didn't get over it for several days. He knew where she was going and on arriving there he aroused not only her employer but the neighborhood as well. Pounding on the door, he yelled, "Here's yer girl."

Billiard Balls Fly

In Fred Britton's pool hall he flew into his greatest rage one night when Don Coffey, aided by a few others, started teasing him. Suddenly Bobby grabbed pool balls and started throwing them, scattering the boys in all directions. Balls landing on the walls of the hall sounded like gunshots. He heaved the last one through the door at a teenager speeding for safety.

Shortly after that the authorities decided he should live at the County Home; that is where, some years later, he died.

BIG "ABE" ELLWOOD
KEPT POLICE GOING WITH HIS DARING

Another one of the interesting people of Sycamore's 102 years, from the standpoint of ultra exuberant fun, was tall, good looking, broad-shouldered Leonard Ellwood. His wild stunts caused many to describe him as a daring rascal and others as a grand guy to be remembered, if for nothing more, for the laughter provided by his many escapades.

There were so many adventures attributed to him that it is difficult to know where to start in writing his story. The crowning event of them all was one he performed in the summer of 1913 on a dare.

First, the geography or scene of this funorama must be described. In that years two brothers, Bert and Roy Thompson, owned a restaurant where Edward's Hobby Shop is now located.

The brothers soon learned from the stories told about him that Leonard would require as much watching as a two year old kid in a dynamite factory. Their worries proved well founded because some of his friends dared him to smash up the restaurant one evening after they had enjoyed a bit of firewater.

Ellwood went to work. After the noise, confusion and yells for the police had quieted down and thrill seekers had time to survey the remains, it was found that he had broken all dishes and bottles he could find, and a few chairs. He topped the event off by smashing the large, plate glass show window.

As a matter of fact, the place suffered more damage from that one man's fun than it did when Fourth of July fireworks exploded in the same window a few years before.

The next day Leonard appeared on the scene and hauled out a huge roll of Uncle Sam's non-inflated currency. He proceeded to pay all damages, laughing and joking with the Thompsons all the while.

Even though they received payment for the damages, the restaurateurs were still unhappy about the interruption of their business. But, as time went on, the event became a standing fun story, and today, Mrs Fred Rote, who was then Mrs. Roy Thompson, laughs about it as being one of the most interesting stories she recalls as she, too, takes a long look down memory lane.

Oh Boy - A Motorcycle

"Abe", as Leonard was best known, drove Chief of Police Barley Stroberg crazy. The chief couldn't seem to discipline the rambunctious lad.

Things really developed into something akin to an irresistible force meeting an immovable official when he acquired a motorcycle. Although he never hurt anyone, the way he maneuvered that roaring two-wheeler in the down town area gave every pedestrian in the city, young and old, a severe case of the jitters.

Abe used to roar up State Street with utter disregard for the speed laws. When Chief Stroberg hopped out to wave him down, he would come back through the business district on the sidewalk. All the pedestrians headed for the nearest shelter as they would in 1942 when the sirens sounded for a World War II bombing raid. Meanwhile, Abe would be thumbing his nose at the perspiring chief.

Finally, Mayor Olin H. Smith, father of the present Atty. L. B. Smith, hired J. L. Prindiville, a police officer from out of town. The new officer vowed he'd jail Abe before he completed his term or give up police work forever.

The most serious event of all of Abe's well remembered stunts occurred on a Fourth of July night. Again acting on a dare, and also to avenge the trouble he'd gotten into because of smashing the Thompson restaurant, he chose the home of Mayor Smith for his target.

Obtaining some huge firecrackers (there was no legal limit as to size in those days), he roared up Somonauk Street aboard his motorcycle directly onto the lawn of the Smith home where he proceeded to bomb the house.

Before it was over he had driven Mrs. Smith out of the place in terror, had broken a large plate glass living room window downstairs, and two upstairs bedroom windows. Some damage was incurred in the interior but fortunately no fire or personal injury resulted.

Officer Prindiville, along with Chief Stroberg, was called and promptly tracked down the culprit and placed him under arrest.

His worried mother, and others of that prominent Sycamore family, by that time were sadly weary of his many exploits. They laid down the law to him and, while he was never actually subdued, he did slow down considerably.

Abe had a natural mechanical ability and became an expert motor mechanic. He served creditably throughout World War I in the Air Corps. For about fourteen years he headed a large Buick agency in Kansas City. He died in that city several years ago.

BILLY JEWEL'S LIFE
BRIGHTENS SHADOWS OF MEMORY LANE

Billy Jewel, an interesting person, lived in Sycamore in the early 1900's. He is best remembered as an expert horseman employed by such livery stable operators of that day as James Crosby, George Walrod, Bert Helson and Dan Holm.

Billy was born in a log cabin in the Charter Grove area but his birth date could not be found when this book was being prepared. He enjoyed only a brief schooling before coming to town to work.

Never a very talkative fellow, he became well acquainted with such prominent people as Judge Carnes, Judge Pond, Sheriff Dan Holm and other VIP's of the day. But no matter what he heard from lawyers, judges or bankers he would never, under any circumstances, repeat.

Loved Children

He loved Mabel Crosby, then aged about four years, and watched over her like a guardian angel until she was beyond the grade school age. Mabel is the Mrs. E.V.K. Schwab of today. She and her mother, Mrs. James Crosby, recall that if there was a mere sprinkle of rain or a light snow, it was always important enough to cause Billy to hitch up a team and meet the little miss at school.

Jewel was short of stature, a little round shouldered and stooped, most always wore a cap, and was constantly chewing on a cigar. He expressed his fondness for the kids by giving them money for candy and by the many buggy rides he took them on.

Fought Loneliness

A picture that is still remembered is of Billy sitting high up front on the glass-sided hearse of that day, as he drove the team for many funerals.

Billy never married. In his old age he became lonely living in town so he moved out to the home for the aged on the De-Kalb-Sycamore road where he gained the companionship of others his age. He died in his 80's. No one who ever knew him will ever forget Billy.

GROSS FAMILY IS REMEMBERED FOR FIRST REFRIGERATOR

In the early 1900's when the Louis Gross family came to live in Sycamore from their farm home in Mayfield, among their household goods was the first coolerator or refrigerator ever seen here. It was considered quite a curiosity and created much conversation.

Winter provided a natural refrigerator for everyone. Dozens of families placed the old time wooden cracker boxes in their kitchen window and, with a door at the front, they had a genuine ice box for winter months.

The Gross coolerator consisted of two identical half drums shaped like wash basins but made out of porous clay. By soaking them overnight in water they kept the hollow interior quite cool. Such things as butter, cream, milk and meat could be kept in good condition for at least 24 hours afterward. Each drum was concaved and when placed one on top the other a cave was created in the center for food storage.

Later came the big, wooden insulated ice boxes. Shaped something like our modern refrigerators, they had compartments in the top that held big cakes of ice. Firms made a business of cutting ice from ponds or from the Kishwaukee. The big cakes were then stored in huge ice houses and packed with sawdust or salt. Then, to the delight of many kids, ice wagons delivered the cakes to various customers.

The ice man cut the cakes to proper size with a pick and small hammer. Wearing a big leather protector, he lugged the cakes into the home by riding them on his shoulder. The cakes were lifted by means of big tongs shaped something like pliers.

Riding The Ice Wagon, Oh Boy!

When cutting the cakes, small pieces were bound to chip off and the kids were really happy when allowed to help themselves to the splinters and suck 'em; they were wonderful to the taste on a hot summer's day.

Occasionally some youngster would be given the high honor of being allowed to ride on the front seat of the ice wagon while the ice man made his rounds. The remembrance must give several old timers misty eyed nostalgia as they look back.

HOME MADE BREADS
A WONDERFUL THING TO STIR HUNGER

Homemade bread was a delicious feature of the early 1900 era. Today there are some people who have never known the delights of a slice of warm, freshly baked home made bread, thick with genuine dairy butter on it - or maybe gobs and gobs of home made grape jelly.

Mom started the big bread job the night before baking day. She'd mix the flour and things and then spend a lot of time kneading it. Kneading was the rolling, pounding and general osteopathic treatment necessary to create a good dough. One of the delicacies for the kids were the little chunks of raw dough they used to be able to beg from their mother.

If there happened to be a little dough left over, and there usually was, mom used to make little round tarts that were absolutely delicious with jelly.

The kitchen was hotter than Dutch love on baking day as the bread was baked in the oven, summer and winter. It was fine in the winter time, but it was rough on mother in the heat of mid-summer.

She would shape the dough into loaves in pans that were sized and shaped for that particular purpose; remember how nice and brown on top and white on the sides they were when all baked?

PEOPLE

McGinty

Joe F. McGinty, expert store window decorator. His biggest scare came when he was cleaning a 45 caliber automatic pistol in the rear of Well's drug store one quiet evening about 6:00 o'clock. The gun went off, the bullet tore through the front window and struck the front wall of the bank building across the street. Fortunately, no one was hurt.

Langlois

Frank "Polly" Langlois was famous for his quick quips such as the one he came out with after a Sycamore clothing store had been burglarized of a large quantity of goods one night. On hearing of the robbery, Polly said that the burglars had planned originally to burglarize a store in Iowa but the Sycamore Chamber of Commerce had induced them to come here. It was Polly, too, who said when asked how he felt one day in his later years, "Awful. Oh, after you're 45 you get everything."

Willard

It is the regret of many today that O. T. Willard wasn't induced to write a history of this area. Kindly, soft spoken and of excellent character, he is greatly missed. For many years he was a telegraph operator for the railroad. His hobbies included working with Boy Scouts, Sunday School teaching in the local Methodist Church, and keeping up to date on the historical events of this area. Probably there was no one around here who knew more of the history of Sycamore and DeKalb County than O. T. did. His many articles concerning the old time events appeared frequently in the local papers from time to time the last few years of his life.

The Mitchells

Remembered among Sycamore's interesting people as we look back down memory lane are the Mitchells, Fred and Z.B.

For many years, Fred, tall, lanky and muscular, served as either deputy sheriff, night jailer at the county jail, constable or chief of police of Sycamore.

Z. B. was, for all those years, the Police Magistrate.

Magistrate Z. B., affectionately called "Bing", refused right up to his last breath to own an automobile or hearing aid. He rode a motorcycle all over the U. S. and everyone had to yell at him to be heard. He once took his wife in a sidecar on the cycle to Arizona and California to visit their sons.

He had his combined court room and office at the rear of the second floor over what was John Tyrell's grocery store. It was many years before John discovered that "Jedge" Mitchell had tapped his store's electric cable and was enjoying free current for his office lights. Of course he didn't realize it; he had been under the impression that the city was paying his light bill.

The DeKalb Ogle Telephone Co. had its offices on the floor adjacent to that of the magistrate. Early one afternoon "Luke" McLagan, who was reporting news, and at a time when his own hearing had turned bad, had occasion to visit the judge.

Both had to yell to make each other understood. As "Luke" was leaving he met several people from the telephone headquarters who were on their way to help bring peace to the war. They had heard the yelling; thought sure "Bing" and "Luke" had gotten into an awful fight.

Dye

Barber shops in Sycamore are modern enterprises as we know them now, but there was a time when, even though perhaps busier, they were far from modern.

George Dye had a shop for a time where Johnson's insurance firm is now located. Kids were afraid to enter the place unless papa was with them because of a huge dog that he owned. Although the dog was known to have killed other dogs regularly, it had never been known to bite a human. Never the less, Dye often times had to shut the animal in the back room in order to finish a child's haircut.

Mention of George Dye brings to mind the hilarious underwear story. Briefs had not yet been invented; heavy, long wool underwear was the regular apparel for men in those days of long hard winters.

One spring there was a warm spell and Mr. Dye was sure summer was close at hand. He vehemently persuaded his wife to use the shears one Saturday night to cut the long arm sleeves

of his undies while he was taking his bath. With the windows open, the neighbors quickly learned from his bellowing that his wife's cutting job was in slight error. She had cut one leg and one arm, thus ruining the garment for anything except a complete summer cutting job.

Brush

Jud Brush's barber shop had the distinction of having the only woman barber to be found over a wide area, his wife. She didn't do much hair cutting, but her shaves were perfection.

In these days of electric razors it is interesting to recall that shaving was as important a service in down town shops then as the cutting of hair. So much so that each patron had his own shaving mug with his name on it, kept clean at all times, parked on a shelf in the shop.

Dime novels and the old Police Gazette were features of the old shops. The Gazette usually carried the picture of some female vaudeville star in pink tights or a photo of a prize fighter posed as if ready for battle.

Spitoons were a necessary fixture, also. Tobacco and snuff chewing, while not so popular anymore, were a dubious pleasure of that day.

Today some barbers refuse to shave their customers at all, while some shave them with electric razors. There are no mugs; if a shop does still offer the old fashioned shave with a straight razor, the lather is dispensed from an electric device that oozes it out at the press of a button.

LACED SHOES AN INNOVATION IN THE EARLY 1900'S

There will always be people who do things differently than the masses. In the birth and growth of any town in this nation its history would not be complete without at least one individualist. Back in the 1900's, a family by the name of Ishmaels owned one of Sycamore's early movie houses. Mrs. Ishmael's purchase of some shoes ranks her as the outstanding individualist of her time.

In those days, even as today, it was fun for some to do their shopping away from home in the big city. Mrs. Ishmael certainly did enjoy this, and when she bought a pair of shoes and paid the fabulous price of \$14, she stirred up considerable interest among the ladies and a lot of worry among the husbands who couldn't afford that price for their wife's footwear.

High Tops, Too

But the price was not the only distinction regarding the shoes. They were laced! As of today that doesn't sound like anything out of the ordinary, but just suppose some local housewife in the year 1960 would buy shoes in Chicago at a cost of \$60 and said shoes would button all the way to the top!

In the 1900's, up to the time this lady made her famous purchase, all women in Sycamore had button shoes. There was only one thing about them that followed the custom of the day - they were tall. That is, they laced as high as a pair of ice skating boots of today.

BITS RECALLED OF SYCAMORE
THE WAR TO END WAR - 1917 - 18

Adults of today easily recall Sycamore events connected with World War I. They look back on one phase of that with gloom; that of seeing draftees leave here via the old Chicago Northwestern RR.

It was an order from local officials that all grade schools and the high school as well should close at the hour the future soldiers were to leave. Not only that, the young people marched to the depot to see the event.

Younger children were terrified. They saw mothers and fathers openly crying as their sons left for war training. The impression left on children's minds was somewhat grim. Mothers of today, who were children then, describe the forced attendance as cruel.

Those Liberty Bonds

Other events, not so sad, are recalled. The Liberty Bond drives for example. A speaker's platform was set up in the court yard, planks were laid over the ends of drainage tile to provide seats for the crowd, and, of course, there were entertainers who sang patriotic songs of the day, such as: "Till We Meet Again"; "Long, Long Trail"; "Beautiful Katy"; "Johnny Get Your Gun"; "Over There"; etc.

A spellbinding orator then screamed the dangers besetting the world as the "Savage Hun" and that tyrant, Kaiser Wilhelm, were depicted as seeking to conquer the world. On one such occasion a speaker vehemently rumbled, "I firmly believe that there would have been fighting here on DeKalb County soil if our armed forces had not joined the brave fight to save the world for democracy."

Following the main speaker, someone of more practical turn of mind then called on the people to sign up for Liberty Bonds. Prizes were given for the largest single purchase.

Fuel Shortage

Oil was not nearly as much of a problem in that war as was coal. Sycamore people can testify to that. The winters of 1917 and 1918 will live long in their memory. They were rough to start with; huge snow storms and bitter cold struck hard.

Then, a coal shortage developed and it became necessary to ration it. Many of this community endured considerable misery as a result of the shortage.

The influenza epidemic struck everywhere. Many civilians and memebtrs of the armed forces lost their lives. Some at home. Some in training camps, and some far, far from home.

A scarcity of farm help developed. Machinery was not as common as it is now. Farmhands were needed to milk, feed horses and other stock, plant the fields in the spring, cultivate during the summer, and harvest in late summer or fall. That huge task fell on business men and high school boys - after store and office hours for the men - after school and during vacations for the boys.

Gasless Sundays

Then came the gasless Sundays. To conserve on gasoline and lubricating oils, Uncle Sam asked the nation to remain at home and walk on Sundays during 1917 and 18. While there were not nearly as many autos then as now, nevertheless, it seemed to be a queer situation with no motor traffic to speak of on Sundays. Chicago's Michigan Avenue and Fifth Avenue, in New York City spent weirdly quiet Sundays, as did all others.

A food conservation campaign was conducted also, even to licensing restaurants and food stores so that strict regulations could be established. Substitutes for wheat, for example, had to be sold in equal quantities with the genuine wheat. It was a very troublesome time for the retialers and housewives.

One Day To Go - Two Die

Casualty lists were the worst things of all endured on the home front. Two DeKalb County soldiers, one of Sycamore and the other of Kingston, were killed only one day before the Armistice was signed. Axel Nelson was the Sycamore man and Milton Wilson was the Kingston soldier who were killed November 10th, 1918. The Armistice was in effect at 11:00 the next morning

There were two Armistice celebrations due to the fact that a flase report was spread several days before the actual end. The biggest observance of all was held in the rain and a wild, old noisy affair it was, too. One of the features in Sycamore

was the huge, steam powered threshing engine which rumbled up and down State Street, its mighty whistle adding to the great din being raised by hundreds of hilarious, wet, cold, but happy, people.

The war to end all wars had ended ? ? ?

LOCAL ITEMS FROM 1917 ABOUT TROOP TRAINS

Maurice Humphrey, employed these many years at the Sycamore post office, recalls that his first taste of the army was acquired long before he was old enough to don a uniform.

He was about four or five years old, he claims, when troop trains were rolling through Sycamore on the Chicago Great Western carrying our fighters on their way to France.

Maury says he remembers one occasion when such a train paused at the coal chute and water tank so the old steam engines could take on fuel and water. Troops were allowed to dismount from the trains to stretch their legs a bit. Maury was fascinated as all young lads would be, and hung around the soldiers. He says the only souvenir he received was a chunk of hard tack - the famous cracker of the army. He ate it and got his first "taste" of war. He served all through World War II, so his taste of the army has been fully satisfied now.

Our 1917 Girls!

Women of today were sweet gals in the days of 1917. Several of those Sycamore Sweethearts met the troop trains to enjoy the glamor of talking to men on their way to war.

It is recalled quite vividly that many a girl received the thrill of her lifetime by being picked up bodily by some boy in uniform who was far away from home, as he hung out of a train window, and stole a lingering kiss.

While the youngsters became excited over seeing American troops moving through the city, Sycamore adults took an entirely different attitude toward the trains. It was often said that they dreaded to hear the long mournful wail of a train whistle in the dark of night as another load of boys sped through the city on their way to possibly being killed, wounded or taken prisoner. Some times that sort of thing was heard all through the night; it is recalled that during one period of a few days, 22 troop trains passed through here.

About the only real humor attached was one incident when a soldier wandered away from his stopped train and missed it as it pulled away. He was put on another eastbound train, and to this day people here wonder whether or not he ever got back to his outfit.

STORIES TOLD OF OLD TIMES DOWN TOWN STIR SMILE

Grocery and fruit stores of today are larger, better lighted at night and have huge stocks beautifully displayed; but today's grandmas and grandpas will tell you emphatically that there are many things they recall of the old time groceries that they wish had never been lost to history.

On the north side of State Street, where Ric Lahti's "First With The Latest" clothing store is now, was the grocery of Warren Peters. Of medium to short height, with a white beard and a twinkle in his eye, the venerable Mr. Peters was a veteran of the Civil War. He had war stories to tell the small boys and John Young, affiliated with him, also could tell them some whoppers.

Not far away was Oleson, Walrod and Peterson's large grocery and drug store, and across the street, about where Edward's Hobby Shop is, was Miller and Sanford's similar store.

On the corner, where the bank is today, there was a fruit store and next to that a shoe store with Rote's barber shop upstairs.

Cheese and Coffee

Entering any of the grocery stores was relished by every youngster with their usually terrific appetites because, almost at once, the olfactory department was touched with the odor of a huge cheese under a glass dome on the counter. If you were a good boy and didn't swipe crackers too regularly, you often got a piece of cheese free,

Along with that might be the happy aroma of freshly ground coffee, just ground in the large red grinder, operated by turning a huge wheel by hand. The coffee beans were first weighed to the customer's request and then poured into the top pot of the grinder. As the freshly ground coffee flowed downward into a sack or can, its teasing odor could be noticed all over the store.

Dewey or Bryan

Cookies in open wooden boxes, and crackers in open barrels were eyed secretly by every youngster who entered the old store. At the first opportunity, when no one was looking, the

little folks would snatch a cracker or two; or perhaps they might even grab a cookie.

More often than not, there might be a pair of old timers at a checker board, puffing at pipes and occasionally making a move. Now and then a few words would be spoken about Admiral Dewey's oration next Tuesday at Baltimore; or perhaps a discussion of that great Democrat, William Jennings Bryan, the silver tongued orator.

The fire whistle over on top of Sycamore's power plant might wail into the hot summer air. Fire Chief Ben Oleson would stop waiting on a customer and run pellmell out of the store and head for the fire hose barn on south Maple Street. At about the same moment, assistant Chief, Johnny Young would be dashing out, too.

Occasionally a bit of humor bobbed up. Like the time when DeKalb's firemen were bringing their new motorized fire engine, the first motorized fire apparatus in DeKalb County, through Sycamore from the factory. As the big truck rumbled up State Street from the east, its siren began to moan. Chief Oleson and Young were both half way across State Street, heading for the station, before someone told them that it was only the new DeKalb truck passing through town.

And there was the time when Chief of Police Barley Stroberg received a telegram from some distance away which read, "Have your man in custody." The chief hurried into the nearest store and inquired, "Where in the hell is Custody?" They finally convinced him that custody was not a town.

Dusty - Noisy

Every now and then a bit of excitement was stirred up on an otherwise sleepy summer day when Mike Cullehan's drayage team would scare and run away. There would be a terrific clatter as the dray bounced over the brick paving or slithered along the old street car tracks. If they headed east after crossing the Main Street intersection, the runaway would stir up a huge cloud of dust on the unpaved State Street eastward from the library. And, when it wasn't Cullehan's team, it might have been the one owned by big Bill Roberts.

One small institution that still survives the rigors of time is the old fashioned ice cream social. Held for so many summers

that no one call recall the first one, they have become symbolic of church ventures. They were held on Wednesday nights in the court yard years ago because there was a time when stores were open every night.

On at least one occasion, boys sneaked through the court yard bushes and, before they were filled to near sickness, had caused consternation among the ladies conducting the affair. The ladies were heard to scream, "The ice cream is leaking!"

Drunk Makes Error

Topping the climax of down town events, causing angered comment at the time, but laughs later, was the visit of an inebriate to a revival session. The good people were gathered in what is now Staskey's Hardware store.

The revival meeting was being held on a Tuesday evening and was well under way when the door opened and in wobbled a town character. The aisle between seat areas at the meeting was fully four feet wide, but the unwelcome intruder required the entire width to get to the front row. Finding no seat up there, he came about as if in a heavy sea and sought a landing somewhere else. Meanwhile he was mumbling and talking steadily. The crowd remained silent.

When the Sycamore officers of the law arrived, the visitor couldn't understand why they were arresting him. After he had sobered up a bit, police learned that he thought it was a new political headquarters and that a rally party was being held.

CHAMBER IS NOW 45 YEARS OLD

A group of Sycamore business men gathered in early 1915 and formed a "Booster Club." Several more meetings were held and the Sycamore Chamber of Commerce was born, receiving its incorporation papers in October of that same year.

One of its first projects, and one which has continued to occupy a most prominent place on their agenda down through all these years, is a road improvement program. Their first effort was the improvement of the Cortland road to the south, and the Mayfield road to the west. Members of the chamber, including its first president, W. M. McAllister, donned their overalls and blistered their hands shoveling gravel and oiling those two roads.

Among other things accomplished their very first year was the establishment of a badly needed public rest room. During the next 45 years the organization was instrumental in acquiring or assisting to acquire so many things that its minutes become almost a history of the times.

Such things as the completion of Routes 23 and 64, Sycamore's Community Park, its swimming pool, and several excellent Fourth of July celebrations of the 1930's are all the results of their constant and untiring efforts.

The acquisition of the new armory and their very active cooperation in the mid-winter fairs were memorable achievements.

ANNUAL CHATAUQUAS GREATLY ENJOYED
DURING SEVERAL SEASONS HERE

From 1900, and for about 20 years thereafter, Sycamore enjoyed an annual chatauqua of one or two weeks duration. A large tent, comparable to a circus big top, was set up in what was known as Marsh's Park. It was a wooded area where the new west grade school is now located.

Many citizens set up small tents of their own and sort of camped in that same area during the period. That way they not only took in every program, afternoon and evening, but often became personally acquainted with prominent musicians, speakers and other types of entertainers of those interesting years.

Three items of progress caused the demise of the chatauquas: the coming of the automobile, then the radio and of course today, television. But during its active years, the chatauqua became one of the most fascinating and bright spots of late summer each year.

The old Sycamore-DeKalb street car line helped greatly by adding extra runs from down town to Archie Place for the hundreds who had no other means of transportation in that era.

HORSE AND BUGGY CRASHES CAUSED DEATH LIKE AUTOS DO NOW

People lost their lives in the horse and buggy era in DeKalb County just as they do today with automobiles. There are a number of such accidents on record, two of which are cited below. In addition to the fatal crashes, of course, there were numerous cases of runaways causing severe injuries.

In April, 1914, Mrs. August Pemme, Hinckley farm wife, was taking some farm machinery parts to town to be repaired. In crossing a ditch on the way, the metal pieces clanged together with such a racket that the horse became frightened and bolted. The buggy was upset and Mrs. Pemme was thrown out. She died within an hour after the accident.

In July of the same year, John Gibson of South Grove started for town with a team hauling a heavily loaded farm wagon. His young son was on the seat beside him. The unusually heavy load in the wagon unnerved the horses on a steep down grade. From a trot, the team broke into a wild run throwing both the father and son from their seat. The father was killed, but the young boy, though critically injured, survived.

ELECTION BOARD GETS ITS FIRST "LA FEMME"

One of the first signs that suffragism was exerting added pressure in the Sycamore area came when the city council appointed the first women to serve on an election board here in 1913.

Sycamore had four wards at that time. The first women appointed and their respective wards were as follows:

First Ward: Judge of Election, Mrs. C. D. Rogers
Clerk, Mrs. E. E. Johnson
Second Ward: Judge, Mrs. S. M. Henderson
Clerk, Mrs. Frank Hollenbeak
Third Ward: Judge, Mrs. Henry Stark
Clerk, Miss Ella Stroberg
Fourth Ward: Judge, Mrs. Andrew Palmer
Clerk, Mrs. L. M. Gross

Appointing the women was a sly move to win the women's votes in the forthcoming city election in which several of the aldermen were candidates for re-election.

ALL LIVESTOCK IS DESTROYED ON SOME FARMS
TO HALT DISEASE

Late in 1914, and much of 1915, the hoof and mouth disease struck livestock in rural Sycamore areas. Fear of economic disaster swept over the farm population. Because the disease was said to have originated in Mexico, the border was sealed at the time and many cattle were destroyed in the west and southwest as the battle raged to halt its spread.

According to Sycamore news reports, the disease was costing farmers in this area an estimated \$600 a day. Milk supplies were greatly reduced and, in several localities in northern Illinois, dairies were forced to shut down.

Federal and state authorities joined in cooperating with county officers in the struggle. On one day on the Ed Roos farm near here, 21 steers, 9 cows, 2 calves and 41 hogs were destroyed and their carcasses buried.

On the N. G. Wilson farm three miles west of Sycamore, officers destroyed 48 steers, 3 cows, 2 heifers, 1 calf and 110 hogs.

In many areas, such as Wasco, farms were quarantined. It cut off 30,000 lbs. of milk from the Bowman dairy there, forcing the plant to shut down.

Both locally and nationally the disease was, at long last, halted. It hasn't been felt for many years now and those who recall it say they never again want to see anything even so much as approaching those grim days.

TOMBSTONE FALLS AND KILLS SMALL BOY AT KIRKLAND

Sadness and consternation were mixed feelings created among Sycamore friends of a Kirkland family in the spring of 1913 when a five year old boy lost his life in a freak accident in a cemetery.

The queer, but tragic, mishap occurred in Vandenburg Cemetery at Kirkland the afternoon of April 25, 1913. The Gabriel family was visiting the burial area and their five year old son, Ellis, was prowling around as small boys will.

He tugged on the corner of a tombstone that had apparently been loosened from its base due to its many years of exposure to the elements. It suddenly toppled over on him and crushed him so badly that he died.

TRIES TO SHIP HER BABY VIA PARCEL POST

Sycamore postal authorities were astounded and a bit riled on a January day in 1913 when a young mother attempted to ship her baby by parcel post. She wanted, for some reason never learned, to send the infant to Emporia, Kansas.

The postal workers explained that such a mailing was impossible. They tried to determine her reason for the action but she hurried away and was never seen again.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT LIBRARY IS BURGLARIZED

One of the oddest burglaries in Sycamore's entire 102 years occurred the night of June 5, 1913, when \$6.00 was stolen from the Sycamore Public Library. It marked the only instance of the library being forcible entered since its beginning in 1905.

The thief or thieves first entered the basement and attempted to break into a vault there. When this failed they tried to jimmy the door at the top of the basement stairway. Again they failed.

After that they went outside and broke into the main floor section through a northeast window. They scattered books and papers about in the apparent hope of finding money hidden under or behind them. All their time and effort netted them only the \$6.00 they took from the cash drawer at the main desk.

TALL TORNADO TANGLES WITH "CYCLONE" JOHNNY

Civil War broke out in the ranks of the Sycamore police department on an occasion several years ago. Chief of Police Fred Mitchell, known as the "Tall Tornado", tangled with "Cyclone" Johnny Thompson, the former prize ring champion. The champ was night police officer at the time.

Some sort of romantic fervor is reported to have been the cause of the eruption. It started with verbal debate in the police station on south Maple Street.

Later when the two met on State Street one of them said, "You did", while the other spit out, "I did not", and the battle was on.

Storm Is Over

The Tall Tornado swung two haymakers that barely missed Johnny, but a short jab to his noggin' jarred him into his old time ring fury and the Cyclone really got going like a 100 mile an hour wind.

He finally landed a dandy on the Tornado's beak that ended the conflict. The "weather" calmed immediately.

PLANE BUILT HERE "FLEW"
BUT NEVER OFF THE GROUND

Sycamore was invaded by several small industrial enterprises in the 1920's, each based on a stock selling plan. The Boone Tire & Rubber Company lasted the longest of four such plants here. The one of shortest duration was an airplane manufacturing concern. In some respects it was touched with more humor than the others. Two others that are recalled in a vague way by old timers of today were a fence factory and a pencil factory.

The airplane idea was attractive to many because an aura of glamour had been inspired by World War I. Planes were used for the first time in that war. Because many of the air battles were man to man, that is one plane dogfighting another in and out of the clouds, war correspondents had attached a "knight-hood" sentiment to that phase of the conflict.

Used Former Tire Plant

Imagination expanded the air service after the war into possible commercial service, and as a result one day a representative of a proposed airplane construction plant visited Sycamore. Its representative began selling stock so that money could be obtained in sufficient amount to start operations.

Previously a small factory had been built at the south end of Park Avenue by a concern that wanted to build tires for the swiftly growing automobile world of that day. The tire plant made a good start and built a considerable number of tires but toward the end its sales began dropping off and it finally failed.

A Mr. Stiles (not the same and not related to either Aaron K. Stiles or the late Wesley Stiles) is recalled as the main person behind the plane idea. An office staff was employed and one plane was built in the building that had formerly housed the tire industry. One motor was bought, brought in and installed in the plane.

Meanwhile stock was being sold to Sycamore people. Many local people still remember a huge sign that was set up downtown which screamed to the world, "Help Fly Planes Built In Sycamore." One of the stock salesmen appeared one day with blank forms for stock purchases and a sample of beautifully gold embossed stock certificates. He also had a telegram which al-

leged that the firm had just signed a contract for an order for 50 planes.

Workers Unpaid

Many recall journeying out to the little factory to view the lone plane. But now rumors began to circulate to the effect that all was not well. Employees grumbled over lack of pay checks. A report circulated to the effect that the plane was about to be removed from Sycamore.

The laborers attempted to have sheriff's deputies attach the plane to cover their unpaid wages. It was halted on the edge of town one night as it was being hauled eastward. Brought back, it was said to have been stolen later and no trace of it was ever found.

So the plant took flight without ever getting off the ground and with that flight also flew the money Sycamore people had invested in the concern. As far as can be learned today few if any ever recovered any of their investment.

WANDERER GOES INTO "DEEP" SLEEP AT LLOYD'S

A tramp, whose name was never learned, was found buried deep in the hay mow of the Louis Lloyd farm north of Sycamore on the morning of February 3, 1929. Although he was jabbed a bit with a pitch fork when Lou found him, he made no move. Lou sent for the sheriff.

It was necessary to move a huge amount of hay before the man could be reached, and then required considerable shaking to arouse him. He had been bumming his way to visit friends in Aurora and stopped for a "deep" rest in Lou's hay hostlery. He wasn't jailed - just urged to move on after being questioned.

SHELEY SAVES CHILD FROM DROWNING IN SYCAMORE PARK POOL

Ivan Sheley, veteran mail carrier in Sycamore, did a good deed Saturday afternoon, June 15, 1932, when he saved a little girl from drowning in the park pool. The child, whose name was never learned, had been taking swimming lessons and was apparently doing o.k. in the water when she suddenly gave a cry and sank.

Sheley happened to be passing the pool at the time and dove in, pulled her out and after a short time brought her back to consciousness. Ivan had not so much as unbuttoned his shirt, but plunged in, clothing and all.

UNDER SNOW DRIFT FOR DAY AND A HALF - LIVES

Track workers saved a 71 year old transient from freezing to death January 29, 1935, a mile east of Kirkland. He was buried under a snow drift along the Chicago Milwaukee St. Paul and Pacific RR right of way.

The aged man was already afflicted with a wooden leg that probably contributed to his near tragic end. Selling pencils and shoestrings to make his way across the country, he had been in Kirkland 36 hours before. He gave his name as J. W. Stanley with no permanent address.

He reported at DeKalb Hospital, where he was taken when found, that the last thing he recalled was stumbling and falling during a snowstorm. His good leg was frozen and the stump of the bad leg was chilled.

CITY HALL BECOMES REALITY
AFTER YEARS OF WISHING & TALKING

Talk of a possible new city hall in Sycamore in 1935 ended in just that - talk. The words were sparked by the hope that some of the famous WPA funds might be obtained for its construction. Uncle Sam turned Sycamore down on that request. Not until 23 years later did this city, at long last, get its new city building. Mayor Emil Jespersen's regime started it and Mayor Harold Johnson's administration had the honor of dedi-

Built without any federal assistance, it was dedicated in the spring of 1958; it's a splendid credit to the city after 100 years of having its various offices and departments spread all over the community.

Before this new municipal building was constructed, the city council held its meetings in the basement of the library. The fire department for a while was in a garage and later in a tiny space next to the old city jail on south Maple Street. The city clerk's office was located for a long time on the second floor of what is now Hagen's Hardware store, then moved downstairs in the same building, and a few years later moved to the rear rooms of the Community Center. The Department of Public Works was jammed into a tiny building at the north end of Locust Street. The mayor decided his office between his home and the city clerk's office.

Having all departments of the city administration located in one area, easily accessible to all citizens, marks Sycamore as the most up-to-date community anywhere around.

SYCAMORE AREA HIT BY TWO BLIZZARDS
AND FRIGID WINDS



For the first time in many years in this locality, the iron horse was stopped. Picture at left shows a railway crane being used to scoop the snow on the rail line between Sycamore and DeKalb. This crane had been preceded through the huge drifts by a regular steam powered plow.

In the photos at the right the depth of the snow in the traffic lanes is shown. The bottom photo was taken by the late Vernon Wetzel on Route 23 a little north of Sycamore, while the other two were taken by Leslie Smith.

Saturday, February 8, 1936, started as most winter days in Sycamore - cloudy, a bit windy, but not very cold - just chilly. Shortly before noon it began to snow. At first there were just flurries with only a mild increase in the wind velocity, but it grew steadily in power. By 1:30 o'clock the greatest blizzard since 1888 had gotten under way. It was very difficult to even see across the street.

Motorists were having ever increasing trouble getting about the city. As yet highways had not been bothered too much, but state and county crews got to work immediately.

Making vision a greater problem was the mixture of wheat chaff in with the snow. It was learned later that this storm had come up from the Kansas area and picked up the chaff from the great stacks left in the wheat fields after harvest time. One easily saw the dusty colored chaff as it swirled in the mighty storm.

Then, to make it worse, an entirely new storm broke from the northeast. The two storms collided in northern Illinois. It all began to subside during the night and by Sunday the snow had quit but the temperature began to drop and the wind became a howling rage.

The result was that entire cities became shut off from the world. Railroads, buses and normal auto traffic came to a complete halt. West of Sycamore on the Sycamore-DeKalb road a snow plow could be seen stuck fast at Electric Park Corners. Down town Sycamore looked like the Arctic Circle. Lanes that looked like tunnels were first used. It was weeks before motorists and pedestrians could move without "working" at it.

There was considerable hardship for several days until highway crews could slowly get one-way traffic lanes cleared. Rural roads remained piled high for weeks. A few bobsleds and sleighs showed up, but the automobile had become so much a part of normal activity by 1936 that bobsleds and sleighs had almost disappeared except for those held as museum pieces.

It was a rough winter all the way. Starting in December 1935, it began to snow and by late February the Sycamore area had been blanketed with twenty-four and a half inches of the stuff.

Long Hot Summer

Immediately following the double barreled blizzards of February, the temperature took a dive. For 18 consecutive days the official thermometer readings were below zero, with the low point of 21 below serving as a frosting over it all.

As late as April there was still one-way traffic through snow drifts higher than the tops of autos in many stretches all over northern Illinois.

Sycamore people were most definitely a happy throng when spring and summer came, but the summer of 1936 came in hotter than a frying pan ready for eggs. For instance, on July 14

of that year, an all time official high temperature of 109 degrees was recorded. There were several days when the red streak boiled up to and over the 100 mark. Yep - 1936 goes down in this town's history as having been a very rugged critter.

ENTIRE FAMILY IS TAKEN BY DEATH
FROM GAS IN HOME

The rugged winter of 1935-36 is thought to have been the reason for an accident in which an entire Sycamore family of four lost their lives on January 17, 1936. They were asphyxiated in their home while asleep. Mr. and Mrs. Carl Jackson and their two children were the victims.

No one ever learned what time the four had retired that night. They were found, all of them lifeless, at about 8:30 the following morning by Clifford Ecklund who lived next door.

Investigation disclosed that because the ground was frozen deeper than usual, a commercial gas line leading into the home had been damaged in such a way that gas slowly seeped into the basement.

Later testimony disclosed that the home apparently lacked the kind of ventilation that would have allowed the gas to escape. The fumes first gathered in the basement, then crept upstairs. Because it gave no sound and was odorless, and there was no explosion or fire, it did its deadly work without ever arousing the four people or their neighbors.

The four were: the father, Carl Jackson, and the mother, Gladys, both 34 years of age; the baby, Marilyn Anne, 17 months old; and son, Albert LaVerne, aged 9.

In the months that followed, there were other homes and places of business in the area where gas lines were damaged by the great depth of the winter's freeze, but no more deaths resulted.

GIRLS LEARN TO SHOOT BY FORMING LOCAL RIFLE CLUB

A girls rifle club, formed in Sycamore in 1928, flourished for several months. The girls soon became very good shots with 22 caliber target rifles.

At its first meeting, Katherine Chatfield Raymond was elected temporary chairman, Mary Boynton Bullwinkle, secretary, and Lorene Bennett Lindsay became team captain. Among the charter members were: Mary Nesbitt Butzow, Marguerite Marr, Lucy Boies Elliott, Barbara Hemenway Michaelson and Abbie Quarnstrom Ernest.

The old armory Building, east of the library, was the scene of the girls target practice. Officers and non-commissioned officers of the Headquarters Company served as their instructors. Armament and ammunition was provided by local retailers and the National Guardsmen.

SAVES OLDER GIRL FROM DROWNING IN OLD PARK LAGOON

The summer of 1930 brought another drowning scare. This one, like the one involving Ivan Sheley 2 years later, took place in the old sand and mud bottomed lagoon that served as the Sycamore Community Park's swimming pool.

Fourteen year old Margaret Peterson was practicing her swimming. Unnoticed by her friends, she stepped off a ledge into deep water and apparently panicked.

Martha Wetzol, then 12 years of age, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Wetzol, was along the pool. Always an alert girl, she noticed the Peterson girl had gone down a third time. She promptly dove in and saved her from probable death; a few moments of artificial respiration brought her back to consciousness.

ONLY INSTANCE OF DEPORTATION
OUT OF DEKALB COUNTY

In Sycamore in 1921 a simple case of wife beating suddenly took on international significance when it became necessary for States Attorney Cassius Poust to notify federal agents that deportation action might be in order.

The case developed when Frank Babick, 40, was arrested in DeKalb on a charge of beating his wife. During the subsequent investigation it was found that, although Babick had been in this country twelve years, he had never taken out citizenship papers.

He had come from Yugoslavia. Also, it was learned that a 20 year old girl, Anica Galovich, had been slipped into the United States by Babick. He had declared her as being his half sister, although there was actually no relationship. She, too, lacked papers.

It developed, too, that Babick had become romantically interested in the girl and that she was at the bottom of the discord with his wife. In fact, Babick had gone so far in his new romance that he had been having illicit relations with her.

Both were deported by federal officers and courts. It is believed to be the only instance of its kind in DeKalb County.

TWO CANNON OF CIVIL WAR STYLE USED FOR WORLD WAR II

For many years the tall and beautiful monument in Sycamore's court yard was guarded by two cannon similar to the type used in the Civil War. They are gone now because they were dismantled and the metal barrels used for scrap metal in 1943 to aid in winning World War II. The guns had finally gone to war.

The cannon barrels were obtained from the War Department after the Civil War through the efforts of the Sycamore unit of the Grand Army of the Republic, the American Legion style organization formed after the war between the states.

The wooden wheels and carriages were created by Virgil Bollinger, expert wood craftsman who maintained his carpenter shop in the building at the northeast corner of Elm and California Streets. Bollinger also mounted the barrels on their carriages.

Bollinger was one of the most expert furniture men of his time; some of his creations are in use today, not only because of their antique value, but because of their excellent condition due to having been made so well.

FOURTEEN YEAR OLD SYCAMORE LAD IS RIVER HERO IN 1936

Phil Hodge, Jr., then 14 years old, did some quick thinking and by speedy action saved a 16 month old infant and enabled five others to escape danger in the Rock River, July 19, 1936. A boat carrying the party tipped over in the river.

Young Hodge didn't stop for any discussion. He dove for his 16 month old brother and brought the tiny sailor to shore. Then, calling to the others, none of whom could swim, to hang on, he sped up the river bank and obtained help.

Others who were soon rescued were: Melvin Marsh, 28, of Chicago; his wife, 27; their daughter, Marjorie, aged 6; and Nestor Liesbeck, 28, also of Chicago.

BANKS WERE THE VICTIMS
AS CRIME WAVE ROARED IN 30'S

In the 1930's, the depression and hardship years, many warped minds turned to crime as a means of making a living. Bank robberies became so frequent and dangerous that DeKalb County Sheriff Oscar N. Larson headed a movement to organize city men into a bank guard unit, and later organized the farmers into rural vigilantes.

Most bank guards were downtown men who would be available in a hurry in case of a bank holdup. They were armed and held meetings during which Sheriff Larson and others, skilled in the art of protecting property from criminal theft and violence, served as instructors.

War Brings Change

Farmers were organized in order to halt the frequent poultry, livestock, and household thievery that was rampant throughout the rural areas.

During this era of daylight gangland robberies banks at DeKalb, St. Charles, Geneva and Virgil all suffered holdups.

As the depression ended and the world began to move into the long, grim period of preparation for the greatest war in history, the crime graphs showed a slowly moving downward trend. Now, in 1960, bank robberies are few and far between; even poultry thefts are rare.

LOSE BATTLE AGAINST SALES TAX OVER FOUR MONTHS TIME

Along with most other cities of Illinois, Sycamore business leaders staged a losing fight against the sales tax voted by the state legislature in 1933. This tax, first of its kind in the state, was put in effect April 1, 1933.

While the taxes were being collected the Sycamore Chamber of Commerce planned and carried out a protest against it. Whether Sycamore carried the weight or not has never been disclosed, but a brief respite was gained when the State Supreme Court declared the act unconstitutional in May.

But the lawmakers at Springfield headed by Governor Henry Horner, were bound and determined to plaster our state with a sales tax and a new bill, based on a study of the supreme court decision was placed before the legislature and passed.

So - the sales tax became a permanent thing in the entire state, effective July 1, 1933. The state gave itself its last raise in 1959 through additional sales taxes, cigarette taxes and liquor taxes.

AUTUMN OF 1933 IS MARKED
BY TRAGIC ACCIDENTS FOR BOYS HERE

Two tragedies place a black border around any picture of 1933 in Sycamore. The first one took the lives of two boys and injured another two when their car crashed into a freight train on the Chicago and Great Western RR crossing on north Main Street. The other cost the life of a Chicago boy on St. Albans football field, the only instance in all Sycamore history of a grid-iron death.

At about 10:00 o'clock the evening of September 3rd, four boys were heading south into Sycamore on Route 23. At that moment a CGW freight train was halted and one of its gondola cars was astride the crossing. The car in which the boys were riding skidded a great distance but couldn't be halted before it crashed into the steel car.

As a result, William Swanberg, 16 year old son of Mr. and Mrs. George Swanberg, and Ralph Wilkinson, 17 year old son of Mr. and Mrs. David Wilkinson, both died. George Vosburgh and Harold Scott, the other two passengers, were both badly injured but lived.

Tragic drama number two occurred on a rainy Saturday afternoon October 22nd. St. Albans school for boys was engaged in a football game with Elgin Academy.

In the second quarter, Ludwig Sunde, 17, apparently died from a heart attack. His body was discovered about seven yards back of the scrimmage line after a play in which he was not involved. A most thorough investigation was conducted. No bones were broken; no fractured neck or skull appeared and all doctors involved were agreed that death was caused by a heart attack.

No blame was placed on players, the game or officials.

TOM WAS EAGER TO KNOW
MORE ABOUT HEAVEN

From 1894 through 1898 Frederick B. Townsend, one of Sycamore's most prominent citizens about whom you have read, served as mayor of the city.

After attending Sunday School one Sunday Tom Roberts, who later became the mayor's son-in-law, asked in the typical manner of a small boy, "Is God like Mr. Townsend? Is HE the mayor of Heaven?"

CITY BANDS NOT TOO WELL SUPPORTED
FOR REASONS UNKNOWN

For some unknown reason Sycamore has never been able to retain the services of a public band. For a time in the 1890's a band, led by Lewis Dow, was active and provided concerts here.

Again, in the early 1900's, the community had a band. It presented concerts down town usually on Wednesday evenings. A stand was set up temporarily in the court yard; some plank seats on ended tile were provided in the court yard, but hundreds just stood around or reclined on the lawn.

A brief attempt was made to form another such organization in the 30's but it failed. Today the Sycamore High School band is asked to lead such things as the Memorial Day parades and, of course, it led the community's greatest parade, that of the centennial celebration the Saturday before Labor Day in 1958.

In the last 20 years no attempt has been made to form a public band. This has always been a strange phenomenon. Genoa, a much smaller community, has always maintained a city band, and so has DeKalb.

SERIES TELLS TALES OF ADVENTURES
OF VENERABLE "LUKE"

The following series of adventures could become a serial story in TV or the movies. They are tales of escapades and incidents in the life of C. R. "Luke" McLagan. There may be more, because as this is written, he isn't dead yet. The fact is, when asked how he is, he usually answers with, "Scared to death I'm going to live and just as scared I'm going to die."

Luke arrived in Esmond, Illinois during a blizzard at 1:22 o'clock the morning of November 22, 1899. As he puts it, neither he nor the town ever grew much. As a result of that first blizzard he has always hated the cold.

No. 1

He wasn't out of full dress diapers yet when he had his first adventure. The only nurse to be found at the time to help care for him and his mother during his infancy, fed him whiskey slings to pep him up. He went into convulsions and nearly died, but a neighbor lady plunged him into a pan of hot water and saved him.

No. 2

Left alone in the kitchen for a short time one morning while his mom was out hanging up wash, he hitched two rocking chairs together and climbed up on the cook stove to play horsey and wagon. In some manner he fell and knocked his chest off the beam. It still is.

No. 3

The family had a beautiful and very expensive clock; one of those old timers set in a heavy, genuine marble base and cabinet that sat on the mantle. One afternoon "Luke" used boxes, a foot stool and chairs for a ladder and got the clock down. How he managed the heavy thing was always a mystery.

He next obtained his daddy's screw driver and hammer and went to work. When his folks arrived home they found the clock taken completely apart. In fact its works were ruined, and papa darned near ruined "Luke's" works with the razor strap, too.

No. 4

At a time when the family lived on the corner where the post office is now located, "Luke's" chums had formed an east side gang who opposed a west side mob. At that time the corner of Elm and Locust streets was an empty lot. A house had been moved from there and a stack of coal was still piled in what had been the basement.

One afternoon the west end mob took possession of the basement and defied the east enders to knock 'em out. Rocks and pieces of coal flew in wild abandon until "Luke" was hit in the forehead above the right eye and k.o'd. The west side kids thought he was a goner for sure.

The Chapman boys, who lived where Bob Niewold now resides, picked up the stricken victim, toted him over to their house, dumped him head first into a rain barrel, and yanked him out again. "Luke" revived.

Upon arriving home at dusk his mother fainted into his arms. He had forgotten about his wound but a large hole in the forehead suggested to his mom that he had been shot. He still has a black and blue scar - a sort of purple heart as a reminder of the occasion.

No. 5

As a little monster of 3 years he gave his mother much worry but created a lot of laughter in their neighborhood when the family lived in an apartment in Dixon, Ill.

Apparently he had a yen for romance at that wee age because he attended a wedding without invitation or formal dress. In fact, he had a dirty face and hands, overalls with patches, and was carrying a small tree limb at the moment. He saw a group of happy people and decided to see what was going on.

He marched down the center aisle of the church, which was only a few blocks from his home, parked in a front row and with wide eyed wonder watched as some young couple became man and wife. On the way out, the new husband rumbled Luke's hair and the bride tickled him under the chin. He ran all the way home to tell his mother about it and to learn what it all meant. His mom nearly had a conipation fit.

No. 6

That same summer he got his hands on the Kerr brothers shoe shining equipment. The Kerr brothers, sons of the apartment owners, lived in the building also. "Luke" proceeded to "paint" a sizeable area of the house with the shoe blacking. For that he received a sound spanking.

No. 7

Next, he got his hands on Mrs. Kerr's washing and found some starch. Having watched his mother prepare starch, he copied. He did a 100% job of starching everything Mrs. Kerr had in the basket, including her unmentionable things - and he found, in some manner, her corset and shoved that in also. The trouble was he never took the stuff out. The whole thing became a pile something like a plaster cast. That brought on a real dose of punishment!

No. 8

His father at one time had charge of the power plant at what was then the Turner Brass Works. It was "Luke's" job to make the long hike up there to take his father's noon lunch.

Enroute one noon, accompanied by one of his boyhood pals, Edward McGibbon, a pause was made at what was then known as Patten's Pond on the corner of Somonauk and Chauncey Streets. "Luke" dared Ed to board a raft in the pond for a bit of sailing. Ed declined but "Luke" poled out on the tiny lake.

About 25 feet out he lost his pole and the raft stopped over a well where there was some sort of suction and the craft began to go down. Not yet having learned how to swim he worked frantically to get out of his predicament. When he got down to his neck in the water he yelled at Ed to do something. McGibbon, in a panic yelled "HELP" once, then climbed a tree. He stayed there, too.

A Mr. Stone, who lived in the present M. A. Buettell residence, heard the one cry for help and noticed Luke about to go under again. In his younger days Stone had played cowboy so much he had learned to manipulate a lariat fairly well. He shot a lasso out and caught the drowning sailor around the shoulders (fortunately, instead of the throat), and hauled him ashore.

He was rushed to the Radford home on Chauncey street and people took turns working on him. After considerable time he came out of it. He was taken home then in some of Mr. Radford's dry clothing - a sight to behold in clothes several sizes too large for him. His father got no dinner that noon.

No. 9

And there was the time when Charles Sabin, long time gone from Sycamore, but then living on a farm opposite the west fairway of the golf course, dared "Luke" to enter the nearby pasture and tease the bull therein.

He accepted the dare and was waving his red hanky in front of the beast when it began to paw the ground and snort. About the time it started lumbering toward him, "Luke" got under way. He jumped the fence without so much as touching a post with his hand and hit the ground on the other side with his feet moving - fast!

He heard the bull crash into the fence and didn't pause to look back to determine if the animal had broken through and was following him. "Luke" kept going all the way home. As it turned out, the bull never got through the fence.

No. 10

Virgil Bollinger, Toots Blagden, Leon Rote and others got a severe attack of circus fever one time and made a "Big Top" out of the Bollinger barn. Trapeze and flying rings were hung and two of the boys practiced hanging by their knees until they were fairly proficient. It all came to a halt the day "Bill" McLagan found his son "Luke" being used as an assistant.

Rote and Blagden were tossing him back and forth between them as they hung by their knees from the trapeze high in the barn. Looking back scares the heck out of "Luke", but he thought it was fun then. Mrs. McLagan nearly had a stroke when she heard about it.

No. 11

He began to lose his hearing in the 20's and by the time the 30's had arrived was rather deaf. The menace of that problem that was to dog him the rest of his life, came out glaringly one night while soldiering at Camp Grant. After midnight this night he found it necessary to go to the latrine which was located some

distance from his tent.

Slipping into his shoes, and wearing pants and shirt, he started out. He did not hear the guard quietly say, "Halt, who goes there." "Luke" kept on going. The guard raised his voice but still "Luke" failed to hear. He didn't hear the bolt click on the guard's rifle, either, but the then sergeant Irving Hindenburg did, and bounded out of the tent in time to prevent the guard from going any further with his duty.

Upon his return both the guard and Hindenburg lit into him for parading to the latrine all dressed up at 2:00 A.M. Said he, "Aw, I'm not dressed up for that reason. I slept in my pants and shirt to keep warm."

No. 12

His days at Northern Illinois State Teachers College were punctuated with several incidents, but the most exciting and tiring for him was a date with a coed on a lovely warm October evening in 1922.

Everything was rosy through most of the evening. They attended a movie and enjoyed an ice cream soda. They enjoyed the moonlight - too long. It suddenly dawned on them that it was too late for the gal to get into the front entrance of Williston Hall without getting into trouble.

They decided to work up to the hall from the rear and try the back door, or something. As luck would have it, the kitchen door was open. "Luke" quietly guided her inside and thought all was safe when suddenly she accidentally bumped a stack of dishes on a table. They hit the floor with a horrendous crash that woke up the entire hall.

Swish - and "Luke" was headed northeast off the campus fully as fast as the day the bull chased him! In addition to all that he had been through, he missed the last street car and had to walk all the way to Sycamore.

The gal worked wonders. she somehow got to her room and into her pajamas in time to rush down and ask the assembled crowd what that awful noise was!

No. 13

This series of sagas comes up to date as of February of 1959. The scene is a theater in St. Petersburg, Fla. "Luke" alone, as he is most of the time now, was leaving the movie house. Out in the foyer he became confused by the bright lights in contrast to the darkened interior and turned toward a line of doors that had "Exit" marked in red letters over them.

When he stepped through the door the surprise was considerable. He stepped down three or four feet to the alley. He had chosen a fire exit to the alley and there was a drop to the paving with no steps. Wobbling like a barrel in a heavy sea, he got straightened out and headed for his hotel, grinning sheepishly to himself.

No. 14

"Luke" was never made breathless running away from the gals so he remembers very well a short and "steam-heated" incident on Christmas Day in 1913. On this day he was sent to the business district on an errand for his mother. She was fit to be tied when he finally, at long last, arrived home acting sort of queer, hours late.

He left his home about 8:30 that morning. There had been a short, heavy and windy blizzard between midnight and dawn and snowdrifts were stacked in front of most stores.

A man, whose identity he has long forgotten, hailed "Luke" from aboard a horse drawn sleigh and asked if he would like to earn a dollar. That was supreme wealth to a boy and looked like a Christmas special from Santa Claus. The man wanted him to tote a box of roses to a girl friend on Alma Street. The deal was made.

It had turned bitter cold and by the time "Luke" arrived at the girl's home he was weary and chilled to the bone.

Apparently he was definitely acting as Danny Cupid because the young lady took one look at the roses, dropped them, picked "Luke" up off the floor, almost hugged the life out of him, and planted the doggondest, wettest and hottest kiss square on his lips, that he had ever had!

She then expressed her sympathy for his chill, sat him on

a dining room chair, and prepared him for the long hike home with the first hot toddy he had ever absorbed!

Hence that queer look on his face upon arriving home. Oh yes. He forgot what his mother had sent him after and it was too late then to go back up town. It was quite an event for a boy of tender years but the memory of it glows within him even today. Yeah, man. It sho do!

JUST THIS & THAT

Those Darn Mosquitos

Monty Bennett is often bothered with mosquitos as we all are at one time or another in the summer months. One night several years ago they became exceptionally thick and hungry in his home so he got out an aerosol can of insect spray and began to spray it around the room. He and his wife were somewhat disturbed to learn soon after that the can he was using contained aluminum paint. Result - much grumbling, cleaning, and a lot of good natured razzing from his friends.

Noble Experiment

The hectic days of the noble experiment, more legally known as the prohibition law, recalls many humorous anecdotes. Such as the time that several young men of this area practically shed tears over the fact that they were forced to use some of their high priced and precious alky to remove frost from their auto windshield.

Power!

On a hot August afternoon at old Camp Grant in the 30's, the sergeants were preparing for a night in Rockford. Had to be dress uniforms in those days, complete with coats and garrison belts. On this occasion several of the sergeants were polishing their belts when one of them thought that a stout drink would get him through the regimental parade a little better. In mixing his drink a drop of alky fell on his belt. The sergeants as one man stopped, stared and took on an awed look as if they had seen a ghost. The alky hit the belt with a pfft, a cloud of smoke drifted slowly upward, and a hole appeared all the way through the belt!

Oh M'Gosh!

If advertisements mean anything the gals and ladies must have been far more comfy on cold winter days back in 1910, 1911 or 1912. We blush to mention it, but the ads displayed long undies for the ladies in those days - fleece lined too. Those good old days - hmmm.

Anvil Symphony

On a quiet drowsy summer afternoon back in the early days

of the 1900's, in the area of east State and Locust Streets, the clang of hammers on anvils gave out with a soothing ring.

Located at that corner for many years was Loptein's blacksmith shop. As the smithys made horseshoes they hammered the red hot shoes alternately on the anvil.

The rhythmic tone of it comes back almost sweetly while we are glancing down memory lane.

On that corner today is a Ford used car lot - the making of horseshoes has surely given way to the coming of the auto.

Down Town Fountain

For some years an attractive fountain stood at the corner of State and Main Streets. At one time or another kids placed most everything in the tank - gold fish, turtles, tadpoles, carp, bass, frogs and crabs.

Like the blacksmith shop, the decorative fountain had to be removed because of the increased number of autos. The city authorities decided it created a hazard to night traffic.

The fountain had been a gift of the Boynton family some years before. Mrs. Boynton's idea was to replace the old 135 foot water tower torn down in 1904 or 1905. Although the fountain was attractive, it also became a utility and recreation spot. Horses were still much in vogue and often drank from the pool; but kids constantly put their pet marine life in there. On one occasion somebody dropped in two large, revenously hungry carp and they proceeded to devour all the gold fish, tadpoles and other fish specimens. Kids who failed to fall in love with the carp finally stole them.

The fountain, complete with statuary that could be climbed much to the delight of the kids, was also a nice spot for dumping high school freshmen as part of their initiation ceremony.

But, as we said at the beginning, the fountain became a victim of progress. More and more automobiles on State Street and talk of more cement roads north to the lake regions, led the aldermen to declare it a menace to safety so they ordered it removed.

Street Dances

A memory that brings joy to the minds and hearts of many is that of the old street dances held on Saturday nights in back of the court house.

The block between Maple and Main Streets was roped off to traffic, the street was swept and powdered, a stand set up for the orchestra, lights were strung over the scene, and a grand time was had doing the tango, fox trot and waltz.

O. T. Greatly Missed

Otis T. Willard is still remembered for his many years spent in helping to make boys happy. Something happened in his youth wherein a romance broke his heart. He remained a confirmed bachelor to the end.

Tall, witty, kindly at heart, he was always ready to take boys on a hike, set up a youth center in the basement of the church, or advise the lads if they got into trouble.

Early Girl Scouts

The forerunner of today's large, well equipped and excellently organized Boy and Girl Scout camps were the camping trips to Byron in the 1900's. Looking back they say that maybe the camps were not elaborate but they were a lot of fun.

For Girl Scouts of the time there were such lovable leaders as: the late Pearl Butzow, Mrs. Charles Young Conrad, Mrs. Melvin Brown McIntyre, and others.

Face Was Red, But

Coach Engle Wold of Sycamore had a natural tendency to blush on the least provocation. His face was of a rather reddish shade anyway, but it took on its most brilliant glow in St. Charles high school gym one cold winter night.

Arriving there someone, who had been "instructed" to do so, asked the coach if the scorebook was in his bag. "No, I don't think so, but you can take a look", he replied. His face flared like an atom bomb afterglow when, upon opening his bag, out rolled a HALF EMPTY bottle of bourbon whiskey.

No one ever did learn how it got there, but it was surmised from the inquiry about the scorebook that some high school lad had managed the sleight of hand trick somehow.

Electric Buggies

In the early 1900's there were three electrically powered buggies in Sycamore. They were shiny black, had hard rubber tired wheels and beautifully upholstered cabs. They were steered by a crossbar that could be lifted upward to make it easy for the driver to get in and out.

The F. B. Townsends, the Walter Langlois and the David Symes each had one. Used mostly by m'lady, they were as unique in their day as they would be now.

It is interesting to note that in this year of 1960 engineers are again experimenting and testing for the possible return of the electrically operated buggy. Only this time it will more practical and may boast of more speed, power and endurance.

One nice thing about those old time cars - they were quiet.

Saw First Plane

It was in the early 1900's that the prediction was made by a Rockford doctor that everyone would be flying within 20 years. He was the first person in Illinois to own a plane and flew over Sycamore a couple of times.

F. B. Townsend owned the first automobile in Sycamore, closely followed by Fred Raymond. Dave and George Rykert owned the first public garage. It was located where the parking space is today, across from the Veteran's Home on California Street.

Very few high school people owned autos in those early days. In 1912 only seven Sycamore young men of college age owned their own cars. Girls were occasionally allowed to drive papa's car but few, if any, were permitted to own one.

Chases Mouse - Dies

That elderly people have a hazardous life even when they are moving at normal speeds is a sad fact, but when they raise their speed limits, the results are sometimes tragic. Chasing

a mouse proved to be a terrible adventure for the elderly B. E. Hancock on the evening of October 20, 1935 at his home here.

In chasing the rodent, he fell and suffered a fractured hip and sprained wrist. The shock was too much for the old gentleman; he died November 8, 1935.

Pastors Exchange Jokes

Two of the most beloved ministers in Sycamore's history, Reverend P. S. Masterson, priest at St. Mary's for years, and Reverend Frank H. Weichlein, pastor of St. Peter's for a number of years, met down town one morning.

The priest had just completed a round of golf and the Episcopal pastor was wheeling a baby buggy containing his newly arrived grandson. Since they lived within a couple of doors of each other on Waterman Street, they walked home together.

By way of humorous conversation, Father Weichlein said, "If my congregation saw me with golf clubs over my shoulder as you have this morning, they'd have plenty to say about it."

Father Masterson's wit was always good, and his answer in this instance was a classic. Said he, "They wouldn't have near as much to say as my people would if they saw me pushing a baby buggy down the avenue as you are this morning!"

Fire Scare

The present Moose lodge hall was built in 1912 by Charles Olmacher for his plumbing business. A fire there one afternoon years ago when the present Elk's building was used as a hospital gave the staff and patients quite a scare.

Cans

Did you know that years ago the Sycamore Preserve Works made their own cans. They made something like 1,000 cans a day there.

Dutch Visit

Dutch Consular General, John Venema, was a guest of honor at a great banquet at the Fargo Hotel in Sycamore during the winter of 1934.

Rattling Tale

The following ditty was noticed in the locals of the Sycamore True Republican of 1904. "Fred Frane is carrying eight rattles in his pockets as a gruesome souvenir since Sunday. He relates that he killed a rattler three feet long in the vicinity of the Swanberg farm north of town. Frane says the snake was 11 years old."

Was It Good?

Mrs. Ella Stroberg Townsend, for many years secretary at the high school, but now retired, tells this story.

She and her mother visited at the General Dustin home one day when she was still a young child. While her mother visited, she wandered around the house, as every child does, in search of adventure. That God blessed her with a splendid physical constitution is noted from the fact that she drank almost an entire bottle of the General's hair tonic that day - and lived.

WOMEN ON CIRCUIT COURT JURY FOR FIRST TIME IN JUNE 1914

The first civil case in DeKalb County to be tried by a jury that included women was that of Townsend versus the DeKalb-Ogle Telephone Company in June, 1914. The events that led up to the lawsuit had taken place several years before.

Involved was the old Mansion House when it was moved to the corner of Main and Page Streets. It became necessary to move telephone poles along Main Street to provide room for moving the big structure.

Mr. Townsend, the owner, attempted to recover the cost of moving the poles, but lost the case. Much interest was aroused at the time - not particularly because of the case - but because it marked the first time that women served on a DeKalb County jury.

WAITED SIX YEARS FOR NEW POST OFFICE OPENED FOR USE IN 1915

The postmaster and his staff moved into Sycamore's new post office building in 1915, climaxing a wait of some six years. It required all those years to measure the red tape involved.

Congress had provided the authorization for the erection way back in 1910 but it took the intervening years to appropriate the necessary \$60,000.

On the site at the time were two buildings; the home of the William McLagan's at the corner, and east of it about where the post office flag pole stands, the old Mansion House.

The Mansion House, moved to the corner of Page and Locust Streets, was recently torn down after a fire completely gutted it. The McLagan house was moved to 421 east State Street and is now the home of Floyd Reynolds. It has been remodeled and bears little resemblance to its former appearance.

At the present time efforts are being made to have the post office enlarged and modernized. Its mail volume has grown considerably since the year 1915. One wonders if it will require another six years to get rejuvenation approval through.

VACANT LOT BALL GAMES ARE GONE
BUT NOT THE MEMORIES

There are few vacant lots left for young boys to use for sandlot baseball or other fun in Sycamore today. Of course, the modern little leagues take care of much of that lack, but yet, boys who are not good enough for the Sycamore Sons and also are a bit too old for little league, might enjoy a game of choose up - but where can they play?

That thought brings back the memory of an incident that occurred years ago when the northeast corner of California and Ottawa Streets was a vacant lot. Many a hot sandlot ball game was played there. The area was officially known as "the tennis courts" because lots of tennis was played there in addition to a few baseball games.

This particular adventure took place late one afternoon after school. Clayton "Jeff" Bowen, now living in DeKalb was at bat. Richard Rumley, one of the heaviest boys in Sycamore school annals for his age, was an interested spectator along the first base line.

The pitcher is not recalled but it does seem to dimly come to mind that it was Kenneth Diller. There was a sharp crack as "Jeff" connected and sent a hot line drive across the first base line. He started for first, but never got there.

A second whack was heard when the ball drove into Dick Rumley's eye. There followed a wail that was heard all over the neighborhood as Dick screamed, "Help me. Oh, help me!"

The game stopped and several boys took him to a doctor. He didn't lose his eye, thanks to the doctor, but he was heavily bandaged and mighty miserable for days.

Other sports enjoyed in that vacant area were: apple pin, nurkey, and make-believe war. A long list of participants comes to mind such as Ken Paddock, Kenneth Diller, Sylvester Mann, "Toots" Blagden, Elroy, Harold and Leonard Bollinger, Fred and Rufus Drewe, Roy Winans, Frank Rose, Gerald Whitney and "Luke."

YOUNG MOTHER DROWNED
DRINKING GALLONS OF WATER

Believe it or not, a Sycamore area woman drank so much water that she drowned. Had that occurred in 1960, Chicago, Rockford and Aurora newspapermen would have swarmed all over this city. Doctors would be pestered for statements as to what scientific aspects of the case are. Actually the event at the time received but scant attention in Sycamore and DeKalb papers. This is the story gleaned from the files.

Mrs. Richard Wald, living southwest of here, had not been well. She was a young mother with a small baby to take care of. On an afternoon in January, 1915, she consulted a doctor in DeKalb, who said afterward that his patient did not appear to be thinking very clearly.

Arriving home from the doctor's office, she drank three gallons of water within the short space of an hour. The drowning resulted because the pressure of too much water distended membranes to the bursting point, and her lungs were flooded. Everything possible was done to save her, but far too much damage had already been done, and she passed away.

BANDITS BRING IN CHILLY TIME
FOR LOCAL MEAT MEN

It suddenly turned cool for Henry Sandholm and John Duval one Saturday evening back in 1925. Mr. Duval was clerk and cutter for the Sandholm meat market at the time. The market was located where Meinert's jewelry store is today. The summer heat became chilly about the time two bandits blew in.

Just why the gun toters chose the market over all other Sycamore firms was never learned as they were never captured to ask 'em, but there might be something in the fact that they may have intended to hold up the bank, but found on landing here that it was in the process of construction. Yes, the beautiful bank building at Somonauk and State was being built that summer.

Wanted Chops ?

The two meat men had begun to close the store for the night. Counters were being cleaned, meat was being removed and placed in the refrigerator, and the shades were drawn on the front doors. As Duval remembers it, one of the unwelcome visitors stuck his head in the door and asked if it were too late to buy meat. The answer came in perfect unison and harmony, "No, come on in."

The inquisitive gent came in and was followed by another. Asked what kind of meat they wanted, one of them said, "Pork chops." Duval started for the refrigerator, but turned to ask how they wished them cut. When he turned, he faced a gun, and at the same time noticed that Sandholm faced another piece of artillery.

Keep Calm - Cool

The bandits proceeded to clean out the cash register and wanted to know where the balance of the money was. Told that it had just been locked in the safe, they decided to be satisfied with the few dollars they had rather than risk being caught using the tools necessary to break open a safe.

They ordered Sandholm and Duval to the back room and shut them in the refrigerator. When the meatmen became chilly and figured there had been enough time for the two bandits to get away, they locked up the market and went home, happily satisfied that the robbers had failed to make much of a haul.

COUNTY FAIR HELD ON EDGE OF CITY IN 1870

In the first chapter of this book, mention is made under the year 1870 that a county fair was held in Sycamore. It is now recalled that it was held in the area south of the city limits where an old race track was. The scene was where the Ideal Industries Inc. plant is today.

In addition to the county fair, that spot was the scene of several religious revivals. Negroes from Chicago and other northern Illinois areas, gathered there for their impetuous and highly spirited meetings. Old timers of today, especially the ladies, tell how they, as children, often walked out the old C & NW tracks and excitedly watched the outdoor religious conclaves and listened to impassioned hymn singing by the negro people.

ROLLER SKATES TO TAXIS IS HISTORY OF STREET CORNER

The building located on the southeast corner of Elm and California Streets has been the scene of several different activities down through the years. Right now it houses the Sycamore Wholesale Co. and the Sycamore Cab Co. It has also been an automotive garage and was the city's first fire station.

How many remember that the building located there before the large stone structure of the present day, was a roller skating rink? Mrs. Ella Townsend remembers it well. She adds that old time square dances were also held there as well as other recreational and important events.

Research fails to disclose any written mention of the rink.

FORMER CGW DEPOT
BECOMES "BLEIFUSS STATION" SANS TELEGRAPH

Much of the structure that serves as a nucleus around which the Lyle Bleifuss home was built, was once a busy railroad station. In 1951 the Chicago Great Western built the new depot near the city water tower.

After the new depot was in use by the railroad, Lyle Bleifuss, owner and manager of Tony's Snack Shop, bought the old one and had it moved to his lot about a mile and a half north of town on route 23.

One wonders if the spirits of the many railroad crews and the thousands of other people who used it in years past, ever visit the Bleifuss home today?

Words of the "ghostly travelers" from the past would be something to be imagined - such as:

"One way to Rochester, Minnesota. Mayo's. My little girl may die."

"Round trip to Chicago, please. I'm going in to see Flo Zeigfield's Follies and those gorgeous girls."

"One way ticket to Champaign, Ill., please. Yep. Going back and graduate this year!"

DISCOVER SEVENTY YEAR OLD STREET DRAIN OF STONE SLABS

In late June, 1959, the Northern Illinois Gas Company installed a heavy duty gas line to provide homes and other structures along Somonauk Street with gas heating. The contractor uncovered what he thought was an ancient stone wall or fence as his crewmen dug the ditch for the pipe line with his modern machine.

Fred "Doc" Foster, retired former superintendent of public works, solved the mystery. He described it as the first street drain ever installed here. It was put in during the 1800's long before Somonauk Street was ever paved.

The ancient drain was built of limestone slabs, the same type as is often used creating rock gardens and flagstone walks today. The drain line was constructed like a tunnel, that is, a long square tunnel. It originally drained the street all the way from the down town area south to a point beyond what is now the Bishop McLaren Center. One branch leads west along the south side of Ottawa Street. In later years some of the old drain near the business district was ripped out to make way for modern utilities.

Obviously, the reason stone slabs were used in that distant day was because such things as tile or metal pipes were either unavailable or far too costly.

The retired public works chief smilingly told of how a horse hauling one of Borden's milk wagons one day way back in the 1900's had fallen into the drain. Winter weather had apparently weakened both the paving and the drain structure. After considerable flaming language, vast grumbling and puffing by the driver, and much advice from the usual sidewalk crew of self-appointed superintendents, the horse extricated himself. He probably muttered under his breath about dumb humans who did not know how to build good paving for a decent horse to walk on.

Just when that drain was built is not known. No amount of quizzing could uncover any record, and not even a guess was officially offered. The first paving of Sycamore's State Street occurred in 1890; Somonauk was paved about two years later. So, it is reasonable to guess that the stone drain was a project of some time prior to the year 1890.

RECALLS OFFICER AND CALISTHENICS
UNDER FIRE AT OKINAWA COMBAT AREA

Verne Viner, who today is peacefully pumping gas into tanks and air into tires at a gas station here, was a busy soldier during World War II. His outfit got as far as Okinawa in that great conflict.

He tells with a smile the story of a colonel who continued to act as if he were not getting enough exercise.

He was Colonel Robert Taylor, whom Viner describes as "a nice old man." The good colonel would crawl out of his shelter at the very first rosy beam of dawn. Then, despite the wicked thump of far off artillery and the moan, howl and whine of Jap shells of all sizes that flew overhead, he would calmly go through with his regular morning quota of calisthenics.

He was bound to keep fit for the duration.

MAJOR HENNIS TELLS WAR TIME HOSPITAL STORIES

All wars create hundreds of poignant incidents as a result of the many days and nights of crushing death and hideous maiming. Major Harry Hennis, a Sycamore dentist for many years, relates a brief story that, at the time of its happening, brought a lump to his throat.

At the time he was stationed in the 34th General Hospital near Leomister, England. The year was 1944. One day a boy was brought in on a stretcher. Major Hennis, his orderly, and a nurse were checking the patients as they were carried in; name, type of wound and other pertinent facts were required concerning all patients, of course.

While talking to the lad he noticed a more than ordinary activity under the blankets on the stretcher. When the officer asked what the movement was, the boy hesitated to answer and the major decided it was his duty to learn the cause himself.

He lifted the blanket and found a live, French poodle dog between the wounded soldier's legs, one of which had been amputated. Major Hennis demanded to know, "How come the dog?"

The soldier said, "Well, y^a see Doc, that stump was always cold so I got the idea of making friends with the dog and taught him to stay there between my legs as much as possible to keep what there is left of my leg warm."

Other and more sanitary methods were found to take care of the lad's comfort and the dog was taken away. Loss of the pet hurt the lad but he soon recovered his equilibrium and with the exceptional personality he had he became a great morale builder for the entire hospital. When it came time for him to return to his home in the states there was genuine regret all the way from the top brass down to the last wounded private.

All was not sad in the hospital; now and then a bit of humor brought laughter. The major tells of a badly wounded soldier who came walking in but who was, judging from his bandages, badly smashed around the head and face.

The major was again taking down the entrance data and inspecting the patient as required. Just as a matter of routine interest he asked him what had happened.

The lad looked out through his bandages and, with a twinkle in his eye, retorted, "Sir, I've lost my upper plate."

The answer brought down the house. He could still maintain his sense of humor in spite of his pain.

Incidentally, through the verbal efforts of an always happy friend in the hospital, the Sycamore man became known to many as "Hennis the dentist."

DOT IN PACIFIC
BECAME MEETING PLACE FOR SOME

Over 1200 people from Sycamore served in one capacity or another during World War II. They were spread all over the globe. So it becomes of interest to learn that early in 1945 at least nine Sycamore servicemen, and one Sycamore girl, touched Saipan in the Pacific.

That little island, five by seven miles in size, is a wee dot in the tremendous expanse of the vast Pacific, far southwest of Hawaii and four or five thousand miles from Sycamore.

The shooting war had moved north and into the far east by that time. A hospital had been set up in Saipan and Captain Vera Floit, now Mrs. Bernard Schlagle of Ohio, was on duty for some time there. She was head nurse at Sycamore Hospital during peace time.

The Sycamore man who saw most of the island, and seems to have set the record for the serviceman from here who remained there longest, is Wesley Johnson. He was there fourteen months in 1944 and 1945. It was there he met his brother Peter, for the first time since they parted company in the United States. Over a year had gone by during which the brothers had been moved about the world, most of it in the south Pacific, and they suddenly met on that little atoll. Wes was in the Navy and Pete did his time with the Army.

Field Utter Hurt

The present deputy sheriff Field Utter, who was serving with the Marine Corps, was injured in an accident and received in the hospital there. He says he had more visitors than he did when he arrived back in the states. In addition to the Sycamore men who came to see him was Bob Nelson of DeKalb.

Another former Sycamore man who landed at Saipan at the time was Roger Gillespie. He will be remembered as the son of Reverend and Mrs. James W. Gillespie, pastor of the Baptist Church here for a time.

Others of the group that met out there in '45 were" John Farney, Marines; Harold Swanson, David Henderson, Edgar Newold and Joe Minnehan, all of the Navy.

Like Old Home Week

A Sycamore man who was in and out of Saipan during much of the war but was not there at the particular time related above was W. S. "Bill" Boies, who collaborated some in preparing this book. Bill was in the submarine service.

All that was needed at Saipan was Tony's Snack Shop, the DeKalb-Sycamore bus line, and Bergies Clinic to make it old home week.

Another interesting meeting of two local boys, but in the United States instead of the Pacific, took place when Sergeant Alvin Peterson met Edgar "Choppie" Lee.

Al was just about to board ship to cross the Atlantic when he met Choppie, who was on Atlantic transport duty with the Navy.

FAMOUS "DIZ" HERE
DURING BASEBALL TOURNEY

One of the peak events of Sycamore's sports history was the personal appearance of Dizzy Dean at the Sycamore Community Park the night of August 26, 1941. The Sycamore Sons baseball team was engaged in a tournament at the time.

There was much fanfare that night as over 5,000 people jammed the bleachers and grandstand for the big affair. Ol' Diz was ushered in with a tremendous wail of sirens. Yep, it was a great night.

Diz couldn't stay here very long, but he did put on a real good show while he was here. He took a few turns at pitching and then took over the first base bag for a short time, all the while clowning as only the inimitable Jerome Hannah Dean could clown.

He evidenced his interest in the Sycamore team by calling back from Chicago to find out how the tournament had come out. Manager Coffey was happy to report that the Sons had been victorious.

TWO HEARSEES CARRY LIVE CORPSES HERE

The story below came to the author a long time after the chapter concerning Fred Raymond had been written. Since page numbers had already been assigned, it was added here.

Clifford Wallmark, former Sycamore man, now living in Ossian, Iowa, dropped this little story while here in 1959 visiting his sister Marion.

When the author mentioned that he was seeking a picture of Fred Raymond for this book, Cliff remarked, "Fred Raymond, why I worked for him years ago - for \$2.00 a week!"

Wallmark went on to recall that Fred's Star Garage had charge of the Johnson Mortuary hearses and among Cliff's responsibilities was the job of taking care of them.

One day, while he was inside polishing the glass, Fred playfully locked him inside and then proceeded to take him for a short ride around town. Cliff says that he was a very much alive and very hot under the collar corpse at the time, but he enjoys laughing about it now.

Another incident in the same vein had to do with a hearse that was owned by Charles Steenrod. Mr. Steenrod used to keep his hearse in a barn located on Sacramento Street. A tall, elderly man by the name of Charley Brown had a tremendous appetite for the spirits of John Barleycorn and found that the hearse made an excellent place to sleep off the effects of the night before.

All went well for quite a time but one day some kids discovered friend Brown sleeping peacefully and decided to hitch the chariot to a team and parade ot through town.

When he was awakened by the jar of the vehicle over Sycamore's rough paving Mr. Brown was scared and angry all at the same time. But the few people on the street, along with a few clerks and merchants who popped out of their stores, roared with laughter at the live corpse.

Brown decided then and there that he would never use the vehicle as a bedroom again.

YOUNG LAWYER LOSES "CASE"
ON A CHARITY AUCTION

Assistant States Attorney James E. Boyle reveals a "case" that never went to court, but should have so he could have used the statute of limitations. He might have saved himself eight bucks. It is a laughable transaction in which he found himself buying his own gift after he had had it in his possession for about ten years.

It all started some years ago when he and his attractive wife, Alice, received an anniversary gift. While they deeply appreciated the thoughtfulness of their friends who had given it to them, they just couldn't make themselves like the gift itself. After a period of time they tucked it away among their souvenirs of sentiment.

There came a day some ten years later when they were asked to contribute a saleable article to a blind auction sale for charity.

Having forgotten to purchase an item by the time they were ready to head for the auction, they decided the long unused gift would be the perfect solution to save the day.

Alice carefully wrapped it up in a beautiful gift wrapping and Jim headed for the auction. His self satisfaction soon turned to nervous hysterics when he noticed that his contribution was being placed on the auction block and who should be bidding on it but the very person who had given it to them.

To save the family name from disgrace, he was forced to top each bid made by his opposing bidder and finally was able to buy it back for \$8.00.

What a picture it must have been when he arrived home and presented Alice with the box she had toiled so long on to make pretty.

CONFUSED IN CHAOS -
A DISORGANIZED TANGLE FOR POLICE

The True Republican almost scooped all law enforcement agencies with the report of the first and only down town daylight robbery in the community's history. Bill Boies now reveals for the first time that someone made a beautiful error within seconds of the robbery.

Telephone numbers of the county jail and the paper office were so much alike that the telephone operator was given the incorrect number and rang the newspaper instead of the jail.

Bill Boies answered the phone and took the exciting report that the post office had just been robbed by three armed bandits. After hearing the first details, Bill began asking questions as any live-wire reporter would. Finally Bill and the late Guy Morgan got it straight that Morgan thought he was talking to the sheriff.

By that time the bandits were miles away. They had used Route 64 east, which it so happened had just been repaved and had not yet been reopened to traffic.

Guy Morgan, assistant postmaster at the time, had just returned from lunch when he found Spafford Warren and Harry King locked in the postal vault. He released them and then made the erroneous telephone call.

Another humorous angle developed when city officers began a search for clues as to the appearance of the bandit car, where it had come from on entering the city, etc.

Dewey Ecklund was Chief of Police at the time and "Luke" McLagan was acting deputy sheriff. Dewey with "Luke" in the police motorcycle side car, toured the city asking questions of residents in an effort to determine whether or not the bandits had been seen in Sycamore prior to the robbery.

A day or so previously the till at Loptein's blacksmith shop had been robbed of all its petty cash and kids were blamed. When Ecklund and McLagan rattled through the west school area, a group of kids ran screaming in all directions. They were all yelling, "I didn't do it. I didn't do it." They hadn't heard about the post office robbery but did know the police were seeking the boy or boys who had robbed Loptein's till. Ecklund and "Luke"

failed to find any postal robbery clews nor the boy bandit, but they sure succeeded in shattering the nerves of mothers of far west side kids.

Sycamore patrons of the post office were a bit nettled and inclined to be sharp spoken at noon that day when they tried to enter the building and found the front door locked. Good thing they couldn't get in as the robbery was going on at the time.

OTHER SYCAMORE PEOPLE
HAVE HAD BOOKS PUBLISHED

The book you have just completed reading is not the first of such literary efforts to appear between hard covers written by a Sycamore man.

Dr. George Nesbitt was one of the most prominent, and at the same time interesting professional persons, in Sycamore for many years. Not only did he have a wide medical practice right up to the final years of his life, but he became quite a noted sportsman and once attempted a literary career. He wrote a book called, "The Old White Horse" that was filled with humor. There are a few copies still in existence, but they are hard to find.

Later a Sycamore printer by the name of Arthur Wellington Glass entered the book writing field in the 1900's. He wrote a short novel of 190 pages called, "The Justifiable Falsehood." It is the story of a white lie that did some good.

A county history by Edward I. Boies and another similar tome by Louis M. Gross can be found at the Sycamore library. In fact, some of the information for this book you have in your hands was obtained from these county chronologies.





C. R. "Luke" McLagan was born in Esmond, Illinois, November 22, 1899. His parents moved to Marseilles and then to Dixon. About 1903 or 1904 they moved to Sycamore where he has been ever since. He took three years at Sycamore High and was induced to enter senior high school at Northern Illinois State Teachers College. The idea was that McLagan was to be a student in a high school department used for practice teaching of the N.I.S.T.C. students. The high school fizzled out but McLagan remained at NI, taking college work to finish his high school requirements. He received two diplomas in the spring of 1923; one from N.I.S.T.C. High School and the other as a graduate of the two year teaching course of the college.

"Luke" had intended to study law. A promissory note held by his grandmother's estate against a Dixon man by the name of Frost had been left for McLagan's education. When Frost declared bankruptcy the world was deprived of what would have been one of its worst lawyers.

He teamed up with his father in the oil burner business until the fall of 1928 when he became a news reporter for the DeKalb Daily Chronicle. He was with the Chronicle for 14 years and also spent about five years with the True Republican and Sycamore Tribune.

McLagan made life miserable for bosses, office staff and executives of Duplex Products, Inc., as shipping and receiving clerk for eight years --- 1950 to 1958.

He let romance pass him by in favor of seeing his parents through depression, injury, illness and death.

"Luke" was persuaded to attempt writing a book. It being his first attempt and probably his last, it is no literary gem. He doubts it will be a best seller even in his home town. So, if you see a skinny old man stumbling about the world without his shirt, you'll know how he lost it.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA

977.328M221N

C001

NOSTALGIA AND GLEE IN SYCAMORE, ILLINOIS



3 0112 025388825